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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE, ADVENTURES, AND MILITARY EXPLOITS

OF

ISRAEL PUTNAM,

SENIOR MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES, AND NEXT IN RANK TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

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THE LIFE

OF

GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM.

Israel Putnam, who, through a regular gradation of promotion, became the senior Major General in the army of the United States, and next in rank to General Washington, was born at Salem, in the Province, now State of Massachusetts, on the 7th of January, 1718. His father, Capt. Joseph Putnam, was the son of Mr. John Putnam, who, with two brothers, came from the south of England, and were among the first settlers of Salem.

When we thus behold a person, from the humble walks of life, starting unnoticed in the career of fame, and, by an undeviating progress through a life of honor, arriving at the highest dignity in the state; curiosity is strongly excited, and philosophy loves to

trace the path of glory from the cradle of obscurity to the summit of elevation.

Although our ancestors, the first settlers of this land, amidst the extreme pressure of poverty and danger, early instituted schools for the education of youth, destined for the learned professions; yet it was thought sufficient to instruct those destined to labor on the earth, in reading, writing, and such rudiments of arithmetic as might be requisite for keeping the accounts of their little transactions with each other. Few farmers' sons had more advantages, none less. In this state of mediocrity it was young Putnam's lot to be placed. His early instruction was not considerable, and the active scenes of life in which he was afterwards engaged, prevented the opportunity of great literary improvement. His numerous original letters, though deficient in schoolastic accuracy, always display the goodness of his heart, and frequently the strength of his native genius. He had a certain laconic mode of expression, and an unaffected epigrammatic turn, which characterized most of his writings.

To compensate partially for the deficiency of education, (though nothing can remove or counterbalance the inconveniencies experienced from it in public life,) he derived from his parents the source of innu-

merable advantages in the stamina of a vigorous constitution. Nature, liberal in bestowing on him bodily strength, hardiness, and activity, was by no means parsimonious in mental endowments. While we leave the qualities of the understanding to be developed in the process of life, it may not be improper, in this place, to designate some of the circumstances which were calculated to distinguish him afterwards as a partisan officer.

His disposition was as frank and generous as his mind was fearless and independent. He disguised nothing; indeed, he seemed incapable of disguise. Perhaps, in the intercourse he was ultimately obliged to have with an artful world, his sincerity, on some occasions, outwent his discretion. Although he had too much suavity in his nature to commence a quarrel, he had too much sensibility not to feel, and too much honor not to resent, an intended insult.—The first time he went to Boston, he was insulted for his rusticity by a boy twice his size and age; after bearing the sarcasms until his patience was worn out, he challenged, engaged, and vanquished his unmannerly antagonist, to the great diversion of a crowd of spectators. While a stripling his ambition was to perform the labor of a man, and to excel in athletick diver-

sions. In that rude, but masculine age, whenever the village youth assembled on their usual occasions of festivity, pitching the bar, running, leaping and wrestling were favorite amusements. At such gymnastic exercises (in which during the heroic times of ancient Greece and Rome, conquest was considered as the promise of future military fame) he bore the palm from almost every ring.

Before the refinements of luxury, and the consequent increase of expenses had rendered the maintenance of a family inconvenient or burdensome in America, the sexes entered into matrimony at an early age. Competence, attainable by all, was the limit of pursuit. After the hardships of making a new settlement were overcome, and the evils of penury removed, the inhabitants enjoyed, in the lot of equality, innocence, and security, scenes equally delightful with those pictured by the glowing imagination of the poets in their favorite pastoral life, or fabulous golden age. Indeed, the condition of mankind was never more enviable. Neither disparity of age and fortune, nor schemes of ambition and grandeur, nor the pride and avarice of high-minded and mercenary parents, interposed those obstacles to the union of congenial souls, which frequently in more polished society

prevent, imbitter or destroy all the felicity of the connubial state. Mr. Putnam, before the twenty-first year of his age, married Miss Pope, daughter of Mr. John Pope of Salem, by whom he had ten children, seven of whom are still living. He lost the wife of his youth in 1764. Some time after, he married Mrs. Gardiner, widow of the late Mr. Gardiner, of Gardiner's Island, by whom he had no issue. She died in 1777.

In the year 1739, he removed from Salem to Pomfret, an inland fertile town in Connecticut, forty miles east of Hartford: having here purchased a considerable tract of land, he applied himself successfully to agriculture.

The first years on a farm are not, however, exempt from disasters and disappointments, which can only be remedied by stubborn and patient industry. Our farmer, sufficiently occupied in building a house and barn, felling woods, making fences, sowing grain, planting orchards, and taking care of his stock, had to encounter, in turn, the calamities occasioned by drought in summer, blast in harvest, loss of cattle in winter, and the desolation of his sheepfold by wolves. In one night he had seventy fine sheep and goats killed, besides many lambs and kids wounded. This hav-

oc was committed by a she-wolf, which, with her annual whelps, had for several years infested the vicinity. The young were commonly destroyed by the vigilance of the hunters, but the old one was too sagacious to come within reach of gun-shot: upon being closely pursued, she would generally fly to the western woods, and return the next winter with another litter of whelps.

This wolf, at length, became such an intolerable nuisance, that Mr. Putnam entered into a combination with five of his neighbors to hunt alternately until they could destroy her. Two, by rotation, were to be constantly in pursuit. It was known, that, having lost the toes from one foot, by a steel trap, she made one track shorter than the other. By this vestige, the pursuers recognized, in a light snow, the route of this pernicious animal. Having followed her to Connecticut river, and found she had returned back in a direct course towards Pomfret, they immediately returned, and by ten o'clock the next morning, the blood hounds had driven her into a den, about three miles distant from the house of Mr. Putnam. The people soon collected with dogs, guns, straw, fire and sulphur, to attack the common enemy. With this apparatus several unsuccessful efforts were

made to force her from the den. The hounds came back badly wounded, and refused to return. The smoke of blazing straw had no effect. Nor did the fumes of burnt brimstone, with which the cavern was filled, compel her to quit the retirement. Wearied with such fruitless attempts, which had brought the time to ten o'clock at night, Mr. Putnam tried once more to make his dog enter, but in vain.—He proposed to his negro man to go down into the cavern and shoot the wolf: the negro declined the hazardous service. Then it was, that their master, angry at the disappointment, and declaring that he was ashamed to have a coward in his family, resolved himself to destroy the ferocious beast, lest she should escape through some unknown fissure of the rock. His neighbors strongly remonstrated against the perilous enterprise: but he knowing that wild animals were intimidated by fire, and having provided several strips of birch bark, the only combustible material which he could obtain, that would afford light in this deep and darksome cave, prepared for his descent. Having accordingly divested himself of his coat and waistcoat, and having a long rope fastened round his legs, by which he might be pulled back at a concerted sig-

nal, he entered head foremost, with the blazing torch in his hand.

The aperture of the den, on the east side of a very high ledge of rocks, is about two feet square; from thence it descends obliquely fifteen feet, then running horizontally about ten more, it ascends gradually sixteen feet towards its termination. The sides of this subterraneous cavity are composed of smooth and solid rocks, which seem to have been divided from each other by some former earthquake. The top and bottom are also of stone, and the entrance, in winter, being covered with ice, is exceedingly slippery. It is in no place high enough for a man to raise himself upright: nor in any part more than three feet in width.

Having groped his passage to the horizontal part of the den, the most terrifying darkness appeared in front of the dim circle of light afforded by his torch. It was silent as the house of death. None but monsters of the desert had ever before explored this solitary mansion of horror. He, cautiously proceeding onward, came to the ascent, which he slowly mounted on his hands and knees, until he discovered the glaring eyeballs of the wolf, which was sitting at the extremity of the cavern. Startled at the sight of fire, she gnashed her teeth and

gave a sullen growl. As soon as he had made the necessary discovery, he kicked the rope as a signal for pulling him out. The people at the mouth of the den, who had listened with painful anxiety, hearing the growling of the wolf, and supposing their friend to be in the most iminent danger, drew him forth with such celerity that his shirt was stripped over his head, and his skin severely lacerated. After he had adjusted his clothes and loaded his gun with nine buckshot, holding a torch in one hand and the musket in the other, he descended the second time. When he drew nearer than before, the wolf, assuming a still more fierce and terrible appearance, howling, rolling her eyes, snapping her teeth, and dropping her head between her legs, was evidently in the attitude and on the point of springing at him. At the critical instant, he levelled and fired at her head. Stunned with the shock, and suffocated with the smoke, he immediately found himself drawn out of the cave. But having refreshed himself, and permitted the smoke to dissipate, he went down the third time. Once more he came within sight of the wolf, which appearing very passive, he applied the torch to her nose; and perceiving her dead, he took hold of her ears, and then kicking the rope (still tied round his

legs) the people above, with no small exultation, dragged them both out together.

I have offered these facts in greater detail, because they contain a display of character; and because they have been erroneously related in several European publications, and very much mutilated in the history of Connecticut, a work as replete with falsehood as destitute of genius, lately printed in London.

Prosperity, at length, began to attend the agricultural affairs of Mr. Putnam. He was acknowleded to be a skilful and indefatigable manager. His fields were mostly enclosed with stone walls. His crops commonly succeeded, because the land was well tilled and manured. His pastures and meadows became luxuriant. His cattle were of the best breed and in good order. His garden and fruit trees prolific. With the avails of the surplusage of his produce, foreign articles were purchased. Within doors he found the compensation of his labors in the plenty of excellent provisions, as well as in the happiness of domestic society.

A more particular description of his transition from narrow to easy circumstances might be given; but the mind that shall have acquired an idea of the habits of labor and simplicity, to which the industrious

colonists were accustomed, will readily supply the omission.

But the time had now arrived, which was to turn the instruments of husbandry into weapons of hostility, and to exchange the hunting of wolves, who had ravaged the sheepfolds, for the pursuit after savages who had desolated the frontiers. Mr. Putnam was about thirty-seven years old when the war between England and France, which preceded the last, broke out in America. His reputation must have been favorably known to the government, since among the first troops that were levied by Connecticut, in 1775, he was appointed to the command of a company in Lyman's regiment of Provincials.

As he was extremely popular, he found no difficulty in enlisting his complement of recruits from the most hardy, enterprising, and respectable young men of his neighborhood. The regiment joined the army, at the opening of the campaign, not far distant from Crown-Point. Soon after his arrival at camp, he became acquainted with the famous partisan Captain, afterwards Major Rogers; with whom he was frequently associated in traversing the wilderness, reconnoitering the enemy's lines, gaining intelligence, and taking straggling prisoners; as well as in beating up the quar-

ters and surprising the advanced pickets of their army. For these operations a corps of rangers was formed from the irregulars. The first time Rogers and Putnam were detached with a party of these light troops, it was the fortune of the latter to preserve, with his own hand, the life of the former, and to cement their friendship with the blood of one of their enemies.

The object of this expedition was to obtain an accurate knowledge of the position and state of the works at Crown Point.—It was impracticable to approach with their party near enough for this purpose, without being discovered. Alone, the undertaking was sufficiently hazardous on account of the swarms of hostile Indians, who infested the woods. Our two partisans, however, left all their men at a convenient distance, with strict orders to continue concealed until their return. Having thus cautiously taken their arrangements, they advanced with the profoundest silence in the evening; and lay, during the night, contiguous to the fortress. Early in the morning they approached so close as to be able to give satisfactory information to the general who had sent them, on the several points to which their attention had been directed: but Capt. Rogers, being at a little distance from Capt. Putnam, fortuitously met a

stout Frenchman, who instantly seized his fusee with one hand, and with the other attempted to stab him, while he called to an adjacent guard for assistance. The guard answered. Putnam perceiving the imminent danger of his friend, and that no time was to be lost, or farther alarm given by firing, ran rapidly to them, while they were yet struggling, and with the butt end of his piece laid the Frenchman dead at his feet. The partisans, to elude pursuit, precipitated their flight, joined the party, and returned without loss to the encampment.—The war was chequered with various fortunes in different quarters—such as the total defeat of General Braddock, and the splendid victory of Sir William Johnson over the French troops commanded by the Baron Dieskau. The brilliancy of this success was necessary to console the Americans for the disgrace of that disaster.—Here I might, indeed, take a pride in contrasting the conduct of the British regulars, who had been ambuscaded on the Monongahela, with that of the Provincials, (under Johnson,) who, having been attacked in their lines, gallantly repulsed the enemy and took their General prisoner, did I consider myself at liberty to swell this essay with reflections on events, in which Putnam was not directly concerned. The

time for which the colonial troops engaged to serve, terminated with the campaign.—Putnam was re-appointed, and again took the field in 1756.

Few are so ignorant of war as not to know, that military adventures, in the night, are always extremely liable to accidents. Captain Putnam, having been commanded to reconnoitre the enemy's camp at *the Ovens*, near *Ticonderoga*, took the brave lieutenant Robert Durkee as his companion. In attempting to execute these orders, he narrowly missed being taken himself in the first instance, and killing his friend in the second. It was customary for the British and Provincial troops to place their fires round their camp, which frequently exposed them to their enemy's scouts and patroles. A contrary practice, then unknown in the English army, prevailed among the French and Indians.—The plan was much more rational; they kept their fires in the centre, lodged their men circularly at a distance, and posted their sentinels in the surrounding darkness. Our partisans approached the camp—and supposing the sentries were within the circle of fires, crept upon their hands and knees with the greatest possible caution, until, to their utter astonishment, they found themselves in the thickest of the en-

emy. The sentinels, discovering them, fired and slightly wounded Durkee in the thigh. He and Putnam had no alternative. They fled. The latter, being foremost and scarcely able to see his hand before him, soon plunged into a clay-pit. Durkee, almost at the identical moment, came tumbling after. Putnam, by no means pleased at finding a companion, and beliving him to be one of the enemy, lifted up his tomahawk to give the deadly blow—when Durkee [who had followed so closely as to know him] inquired whether he had escaped unhurt. Captain Putnam, instantly recognizing the voice, dropped his weapon; and both springing from the pit, made good their retreat to the neighboring hedges, amidst a shower of random shot.—There they betook themselves to a large log, by the side of which they lodged the remainder of the night. Before they lay down, Captain Putnam said he had a little rum in his canteen, which could never be more acceptable or necessary; but on examining the canteen, which hung under his arm, he found the enemy had pierced it with their balls, and that there was not a drop of liquor left. The next day he found fourteen bullet holes in his blanket.

In the same summer, a body of the enemy, consisting of 600 men, attacked the

baggage and provision wagons at a place called the Half-way Brook; it being equidistant from Fort Edward and the south end of Lake George. Having killed the oxen and plundered the wagons, they retreated with their booty, without having met with such resistance as might have been expected from the strength of the escort. General Webb, upon receiving intelligence of this disaster, ordered the Captains Putnam and Rogers "to take 100 volunteers in boats, with "two wall-pieces and two blunderbusses, and to proceed down lake George to a certain point; there to leave the batteaux under a proper guard, and thence to cross by land so as to harass, and, if practicable, intercept the retreating enemy at the narrows." These orders were executed with so much punctuality, that the party arrived at the destined place half an hour before the hostile boats came in view. Here they waited, under cover, until the enemy (ignorant of these proceedings) entered the narrows with their batteaux loaded with plunder. Then the volunteers poured upon them volley after volley, killed many of the oarsmen, sunk a number of the batteaux, and would soon have destroyed the whole body of the enemy, had not the usual precipitancy of their passage (favored by the wind) carried them

through the narrows into the wide part of South Bay, where they were out of the reach of musket shot. The shattered remnant of the little fleet soon arrived at Ticonderoga, and gave information that Putnam and Rogers were at the narrows. A fresh party was instantly detached to cut them in pieces, on their return to Fort Edward. Our partisans, sensible of the probability of such an attempt, and being full twenty miles from their boats, strained every nerve to reach them as soon as possible, which they effected the same night.—Next day, when they had returned as far as Sabbath-day-point, they discovered, on shore, the before-mentioned detachment of 300 men, who had passed them in the night, and who now, on perceiving our party, took to their boats with the greatest alacrity, and rowed out to give battle.—They advanced in line, maintaining a good mein, and felicitating themselves upon the prospect of an easy conquest, from the great superiority of their numbers. Flushed with these expectations, they were permitted to come within pistol-shot before a gun was fired. At once, the wall-pieces and blunder-busses, which had been brought to rake them in the most vulnerable point, were discharged. As no such reception had been foreseen, the assailants were

thrown into the utmost disorder. Their terror and confusion were greatly increased by a well-directed and most destructive fire of the small arms. The larger pieces being re-loaded, without annoyance, continued, alternately with the musketry, to make dreadful havoc, until the rout was completed, and the enemy driven back to Ticonderoga. In this action, one of the bark canoes contained twenty Indians, of whom fifteen were killed. Great numbers from other boats, both of French and Indians, were seen to fall overboard: but the account of their total loss could never be ascertained. Rogers and Putnam had but one man killed and two slightly wounded. They now landed on the point, and having refreshed their men at leisure, returned in good order to the British camp.

Soon after these rencounters, a singular kind of race was run by our nimble-footed Provincial and an active young Frenchman. The liberty of each was by turns at stake. General Webb, wanting a prisoner for the sake of intelligence, sent Captain Putnam with five men to procure one. The Captain concealed himself near the road which leads from Ticonderoga to the Ovens.—His men seemed fond of showing themselves, which unsoldierlike conduct he prohibited with the severest reprehension.—

This rebuke they imputed to unnecessary fear. The observation is as true as vulgar, that persons distinguishable for temerity when there is no apparent danger, are generally poltroons whenever danger approaches. They had not lain long in the high grass, before a Frenchman and an Indian passed—the Indian was considerably in advance. As soon as the former had gone by, Putnam, relying on the fidelity of his men, sprang up, ran, and ordered them to follow. After running about thirty rods, he seized the Frenchman by the shoulders and forced him to surrender: but his prisoner looking round, perceiving no other enemy, and knowing the Indian would be ready in a moment to assist him, began to make an obstinate resistance. Putnam, finding himself betrayed by his men into a perilous dilemma, let go his hold, stepped back and snapped his piece, which was levelled at the Frenchman's breast. It missed fire. Upon this he thought it most prudent to retreat. The Frenchman, in turn, chased him back to his men, who at last raised themselves from the grass; which his pursuer espying in good time for himself, made his escape. Putnam, mortified that these men had frustrated his success, dismissed them with disgrace; and, not long after, accomplished his object.

Nothing worthy of remark happened during this campaign except the loss of Oswego. That fort, which had been built by General Shirley to protect the peltry trade, cover the country on the Mohawk River, and facilitate an invasion of Canada by Frontenac and Niagara, fell into the hands of the enemy, with a garrison of sixteen hundred men, and one hundred pieces of cannon.

The active services of Captain Putnam on every occasion attracted the admiration of the public, and induced the legislature of Connecticut to promote him to a majority in 1757.

Lord Louden was then commander-in-chief of the British forces in America.—The expedition against Crown Point, which, from the commencement of hostilities, had been in contemplation, seemed to give place to a more important operation that was meditated against Louisburg.—But the arrival of the Brest squadron at that place prevented the attempt: and the loss of Fort William Henry served to class this with the two former unsuccessful campaigns. It was rumored, and partially credited at the time, that General Webb, who commanded in the northern department, had early intimation of the move-

ment of the French army, and might have effectually succored the garrison.

A few days before the siege, Major Putnam, with two hundred men, escorted General Webb from Fort William Henry.

The object was to examine the state of this fortification, which stood at the southern extremity of Lake George. Several abortive attempts having been made by Major Rogers and others in the night season, Major Putnam proposed to go down the lake in open daylight, land at Northwest Bay, and tarry on shore until he could make satisfactory discovery of the enemy's actual situation at Ticonderoga and the adjacent posts. The plan (which he suggested) of landing with only five men, sending back the boats, to prevent detection, was deemed too hazardous by the general. At length, however, he was permitted to proceed with eighteen volunteers in three whale boats: but before he arrived at Northwest Bay he discovered a body of men on an island. Immediately upon this, he left two boats to fish at a distance, that they might not occasion an alarm, and returned himself with the information. The general, seeing him rowing back with great velocity in a single boat, concluded the others were captured, and sent a skiff with orders for him alone to come on shore. Af-

ter advising the general of the circumstances, he urged the expediency of returning to make further discoveries, and bring off the boats. Leave was reluctantly given. He found his people, and passing still onward, discoverd (by the aid of a good perspective glass) a large army in motion.—By this time several of the advanced canoes had nearly surrounded him, but, by the swiftness of his whaleboats, he escaped through the midst of them. On his return, he informed the general minutely of all he had seen, and intimated his conviction that the expedition must obviously be destined against Fort William Henry. That commander, strictly enjoining silence on the subject, directed him to put his men under an oath of secrecy, and to prepare without loss of time, to return to the head quarters of the army. Major Putnam observed "he hoped his excellency did not intend to neglect so fair an opportunity of giving battle, should the enemy presume to land." "What do you think we should do here?" replied the general. Accordingly, the next day he returned, and the day after Colonel Monro was ordered from Fort Edward, with his regiment, to reinforce the garrison. That officer took with him all his rich baggage and camp equipage, notwithstanding Major Putnam's ad-

vice to the contrary. The day following his arrival, the enemy landed and besieged the place.

In the month of August, five hundred men were employed, under the orders of Majors Rogers and Putnam, to watch the motions of the enemy near Ticonderoga. At South Bay they separated the party into two equal divisions, and Rogers took a position on Wood Creek, twelve miles distant from Putnam. Upon being, some time afterwards, discovered, they formed a re-union, and concerted measures for returning to Fort Edward. As soon as the heavy dew, which had fallen the preceding night, would permit, the detachment moved in one body, Putnam being in front, D'Ell in the centre, and Rogers in the rear. The impervious growth of shrubs and underbrush that had sprung up, where the land had been partially cleared some years before, occasioned this change in the order of march. At the moment of moving, the famous French partisan, Molang, who had been sent with five hundred men to intercept our party, was not more than one mile and a half distant from them. Having heard the firing, he hastened to lay an ambuscade precisely in that part of the wood most favorable to his project. Major Putnam was just emerging from the

thicket into the common forest, when the enemy rose, and with discordant yells and whoops, commenced an attack upon the right of his division. Surprised, but undismayed, Putnam halted, returned the fire, and passed the word for the other divisions to advance for his support. D'Ell came.—The action, though widely scattered, and principally fought between man and man, soon grew general and intensely warm. It would be as difficult as useless to describe this irregular and ferocious mode of fighting. Rogers came not up: but, as he declared afterwards, formed a circular file, between our party and Wood Creek, to prevent their being taken in rear, or enfiladed. Successful as he commonly was, his conduct did not always pass without an unfavorable imputation. Notwithstanding it was a current saying in the camp, "that Rogers always *sent*, but Putnam *led* his men to action;" yet, in justice, it ought to be remarked here, that the latter has never been known, in relating the story of this day's disaster, to affix any stigma upon the conduct of the former.

Major Putnam, perceiving it would be impracticable to cross the creek, determined to maintain his ground. Inspired by his example, the officers and men behaved with great bravery: sometimes they

fought aggregately in open view, and sometimes individually under cover; taking aim from behind the bodies of trees, and acting in a manner independent of each other.—For himself, having discharged his fusee several times, at length it missed fire, while the muzzle was pressed against the breast of a large and well proportioned savage. This *warrior*, availing himself of the indefensible attitude of his adversary, with a tremendous wharwhoop sprang forward, with his lifted hatchet, and compelled him to surrender: and having disarmed and bound him fast to a tree, returned to the battle.

The intrepid captains D'Ell and Harman, who now commanded, were forced to give ground for a little distance: the savages, conceiving this to be the certain harbinger of victory, rushed impetuously on with dreadful and redoubled cries. But our two partisans, collecting a handful of brave men, gave the pursuers so warm a reception as to oblige them, in turn, to retreat a little beyond the spot at which the action had commenced. Here they made a stand.—This change of ground occasioned the tree to which Putnam was tied, to be directly between the fire of the two parties. Human imagination can hardly figure to itself a more deplorable situation. The balls

flew incessantly from either side, many struck the tree, while some passed through the sleeves and skirts of his coat. In this state of jeopardy, unable to move his body, to stir his limbs, or even to incline his head, he remained more than an hour. So equally balanced and so obstinate was the fight! At one moment, while the battle swerved in favor of the enemy, a young savage chose an odd way of discovering his humor. He found Putnam bound. He might have despatched him at a blow.—But he loved better to excite the terrors of the prisoner, by hurling a tomahawk at his head, or rather it should seem his object was to see how near he could throw it without touching him—the weapon stuck in the tree a number of times at a hair's breadth distance from the mark. When the Indian had finished his amusement, a French Basofficer (a much more inveterate savage by nature, though descended from so humane and polished a nation) perceiving Putnam, came up to him, and, leveling a fusee within a foot of his breast, attempted to discharge it; it missed fire—ineffectually, did the intended victim solicit the treatment due to his situation, by repeating, that he was a prisoner of war. The degenerate Frenchman did not understand the language of honor or nature; deaf to their

voice, and deaf to sensibility, he violently and repeatedly pushed the muzzle of his gun against Putnam's ribs, and finally gave him a cruel blow on the jaw with the butt of his piece. After this dastardly deed, he left him.

At length the active intrepidity of D'Ell and Harman,* seconded by the persevering valor, of their followers, prevailed. They drove from the field the enemy, who left about 90 dead behind them. As they were retiring, Putnam was untied by the Indian who had made him prisoner, and whom he afterwards called master. Having been conducted for some distance from the place of action, he was stripped of his coat, vest, stockings, and shoes; loaded with as many of the packs of the wounded as could be piled upon him; strongly pinioned, and his wrists tied as closely together as they could be pulled with a cord. After he had marched, through no pleasant paths, in this painful manner, for many a tedious mile, the party (who were excessively fatigued) halted to breathe. His hands were now immoderately swelled from the tightness of the ligature: and the pain had become intolerable. His feet were so much scratch-

* This worthy officer is still living at Marlborough, in the state of Massachusetts.

ed that the blood dropped fast from them. Exhausted with bearing a burden above his strength, and frantic with torments exquisite beyond endurance, he entreated the Irish interpreter to implore, as the last and only grace he desired of the savges, that they would knock him on the head and take his scalp at once, or loose his hands. A French officer, instantly interposing, ordered his hands to be unbound, and some of the packs to be taken off. By this time the Indian who captured him, and had been absent with the wounded, coming up, gave him a pair of moccasins; and expressed great indignation at the unworthy treatment his prisoner had suffered.

That savage chief again returned to the care of the wounded, and the Indians, about two hundred in number, went before the rest of the party to the place where the whole were, that night, to encamp. They took with them Major Putnam, on whom (besides innumerable other outrages) they had the barbarity to inflict a deep wound with a tomahawk, in the left cheek. His sufferings were in this place to be consummated. A scene of horror, infinitely greater than had ever met his eyes before, was now preparing. It was determined to roast him alive. For this purpose they led him into a dark forest, stripped him naked,

bound him to a tree, and piled dry brush, with other fuel, at a small distance in a circle round him. They accompanied their labors as if for his funeral dirge, with screams and sounds inimitable but by savage voices. Then they set the piles on fire. A sudden shower dampened the rising flame. Still they strove to kindle it, until, at last, the blaze ran fiercely round the circle. Major Putnam soon began to feel the scorching heat. His hands were so tied that he could move his body. He often shifted sides as the fire approached. This sight, at the very idea of which all but savages must shudder, afforded the highest diversion to his inhuman tormentors, who demonstrated the delirium of their joy by correspondent yells, dances and gesticulations. He saw clearly that his final hour was inevitably come. He summoned all his resolution, and composed his mind as far as the circumstances could admit, to bid an eternal farewell to all he held most dear. To quit the world would scarcely have cost a single pang, but for the idea of home, but for the remembrance of domestic endearments, of the affectionate partner of his soul, and of their beloved offspring. His thought was ultimately fixed on a happier state of existence, beyond the tortures he was beginning to endure. The bitter-

ness of death, even of that death which is accompanied with the keenest agonies, was in a manner, past—nature, with a feeble struggle, was quitting its last hold on sublunary things—when a French officer rushed through the crowd, opened a way by scattering the burning brands, and unbound the victim. It was Molang himself—to whom a savage, unwilling to see another human sacrifice immolated, had run and communicated the tidings. The commandant spurned and severely reprimanded the barbarians, whose nocturnal powwas and hellish orgies he suddenly ended. Putnam did not want for feeling or gratitude. The French commander, fearing to trust him alone with them, remained until he could deliver him in safety into the hands of his master.

The savage approached his prisoner kindly, and seemed to treat him with particular affection He offered him some hard biscuit, but finding that he could not chew them, on account of the blow he had received from the Frenchman, this more humane savage soaked some of the biscuit and made him suck the pulp-like part of it. Determined, however, not to lose his captive, (the refreshment being finished,) he took the moccasins from his feet and tied them to one of his wrists; then directing

him to lie down on his back upon the bare ground, he stretched one arm to its full length, and bound it fast to a young tree; the other arm was extended and bound in the same manner—his legs were stretched apart and fastened to two saplings. Then a number of tall but slender poles were cut down: which, with some long bushes, were laid across his body from head to foot: on each side lay as many Indians as could conveniently find lodging, in order to prevent the possibility of his escape. In this disagreeable and painful posture he remained until morning. During this night, the longest and most dreary conceivable, our hero used to relate that he felt a ray of cheerfulness come casually across his mind, and could not even refrain from smiling, when he reflected on this ludicrous group for a painter, of which he himself was the principal figure.

The next day he was allowed his blanket and moccasins, and permitted to march without carrying any pack, or receiving any insult. To allay his extreme hunger, a little bear's meat was given, which he sucked through his teeth. At night, the party arrived at Ticonderoga, and the prisoner was placed under the care of a French guard. The savages, who had been prevented from glutting their diaboli-

cal thirst for blood, took other opportunities of manifesting their malevolence for the disappointment, by horrid grimaces and angry gestures, but they were suffered no more to offer violence or personal indignity to him.

After having been examined by the Marquis de Montcalm, Major Putnam was conducted to Montreal by a French officer, who treated him with the greatest indulgence and humanity.

At this place were several prisoners.—Colonel Peter Schuyler, remarkable for his philanthropy, generosity, and friendship, was of the number. No sooner had he heard of Major Putnam's arrival, than he went to the Interpreter's quarters, and inquired, whether he had a provincial major in his custody? He found Major Putnam in a comfortless condition—without hat, waistcoat, or hose—the remnant of his clothing miserably dirty, and ragged—his beard long and squalid—his legs torn by thorns and briars—his face gashed with wounds and swollen with bruises. Colonel Schuyler, irritated beyond all sufferance at such a sight, could scarcely restrain his speech within limits consistent with the prudence of a prisoner, and the meekness of a christian. Major Putnam was immediately treated according to his rank, clothed in a

decent manner, and supplied with money, by that liberal and sympathetic patron of the distressed.

The capture of Frontenack by General Bradstreet, afforded occasion for an exchange of prisoners: Colonel Schuyler was comprehended in the cartel. A generous spirit can never be satisfied with imposing tasks for its generosity to accomplish. Apprehensive, if it should be known that Putnam was a distinguished partisan, his liberation might be retarded, and knowing that there were officers, who, from the length of their captivity, had a claim of priority to exchange; he had, by his happy address, induced the governor to offer, that whatever officer he might think proper to nominate, should be included in the present cartel. With great politeness in manner, but seeming indifference as to object, he expressed his warmest acknowledgements to the governor, and said: "There is an old man here, who is a provincial major, and wishes to be at home with his wife and children. He can do no good here, or any where else: I can believe your excellency had better keep some of the young men, who have no wife or children to care for, and let the old fellow go home with me." This justifiable finesse had the desired effect.

We now arrive at the period, when the prowess of Britian, victorious alike by sea and land, in the new and in the old world had elevated her name to the zenith of national glory. The conquest of Quebec opened the way for the total reduction of Canada. On the side of the Lakes, Amherst having captured the posts Ticonderoga and Crown-Point, applied himself to strengthen the latter. Putnam, who had been raised to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and present at these operations, was employed the remainder of this and some part of the succeeding season, in superintending the parties which were detached to procure timber and other materials for the fortification.

In 1760, General Amherst, a sagacious, humane, and experienced commander, planned the termination of the war in Canada, by a bloodless conquest. For this purpose, three armies were destined to cooperate by different routes against Montreal, the only remaining place of strength the enemy held in that country. The corps formerly commanded by General Wolfe, now General Murray, was ordered to ascend the river St. Lawrence; another (under Col. Haviland) to penetrate by the Isle Aux Noix; and the third, consisting of about ten thousand men, commanded by

the general himself, after passing up the Mohawk river, and taking its course by the Lake Ontario, was to form a junction by falling down the St. Lawrence. In this progress more than one occasion presented itself to manifest the intrepidity and soldiership of Lieutenant Colonel Putnam. Two armed vessels obstructed the passage and prevented the attack on Oswegatchie.—Putnam, with 1000 men, in 50 batteaux, undertook to board them. This dauntless officer, ever sparing of the blood of others, as prodigal of his own, to accomplish it with the less loss, put himself (with a chosen crew, a beetle and wedges) in the van, with a design to wedge the rudders, so that the vessels should not be able to turn their broadsides, or perform any other manœuvre. All the men in his little fleet were ordered to strip to their waistcoats, and advance at the same time. He promised, if he lived, to join and show them the way up the sides. Animated by so daring an example, they moved swiftly, in profound stillness, as to certain victory or death. The people on board the ships, beholding the good countenance with which they approached, ran one of the vessels on shore, and struck the colors of the other. Had it not been for the dastardly conduct of the ship's company, in the latter, who compel-

led the captain to haul down his ensign, he would have given the assailants a bloody reception: for the vessels were well provided with spears, nettings, and every customary instrument of annoyance as well as defence.

It now remained to attack the fortress, which stood on an island, and seemed to have been rendered inaccessible by a high abattis of black ash, that every where projected over the water. Lieutenant Colonel Putnam proposed a mode of attack, and offered his services to carry it into effect. The general approved the proposal. The sides of each boat were surrounded with fascines (musket proof)which covered the men completely. A wide plank, twenty feet in length, was then fitted to every boat in such a manner, by having an angular piece sawed from one extremity, that, when fastened by ropes on both sides of the bow, it might be raised or lowered at pleasure. The design was, that the plank should be held erect, while the oarsman forced the bow with the utmost exertion against the abattis; and that, afterwards, being dropped on the pointed brush, it should serve as a kind of bridge to assist the men in passing over them. Lieutenant Colonel Putnam, having made his dispositions to attempt the escalade in many pla-

ces at the same moment, advanced with his boats in admirable order. The garrison perceiving these extraordinary and unexpected machines, waited not the assault, but capitulated. Lieutenant Colonel Putnam was particularly honored by General Amherst, for his ingenuity in this invention, and promptitude in its execution. The three armies arrived at Montreal, within two days of each other; and the conquest of Canada become complete without the loss of a single drop of blood.

At no great distance from Montreal, is the savage village, called Cochnawaga. Here our partisan found the Indian chief who had formerly made him prisoner.—That Indian was highly delighted to see his old acquaintance, whom he entertained in his own well-built stone house, with great friendship and hospitality; while his guest did not discover less satisfaction in an opportunity of shaking the brave savage by the hand, and proffering him protection in this reverse of his military fortunes.

When the belligerent powers were considerably exhausted, a rupture took place between Great Britian and Spain, in the month of January, 1762, and an expedition was formed that campaign, under Lord Albemarle, against the Havanna.

A body of provincials, composed of five hundred men from the Jerseys, eight hundred from New York, and one thousand from Connecticut, joined his lordship.—Gen. Lyman, who raised the regiment of one thousand men in Connecticut, being the senior officer, commanded the whole: of course, the im mediate command of his regiment devolved upon Putnam. The fleet that carried these troops sailed from New York, and arrived safely on the coast of Cuba. There a terrible storm arose, and the transport in which Lieutenant Colonel Putnam had embarked with five hundred men, was wrecked on a rift of craggy rocks. The weather was so tempestuous, and the surf, which ran mountain-high, dashed with such violence against the ship, that the most experienced seamen expected it would soon part asunder. The rest of the fleet, so far from being able to afford assistance, with difficulty rode out the gale. In this dep orable situation, as the only expedient by which they could be saved, strict order was maintained, and all those people who best understood the use of tools, instantly employed in constructing rafts from spars, plank, and whatever other materials could be procured. There happened to be on board a large quantity of strong cords, (the same that are used in

the whale fishery,) which, being fastened to the rafts, after the first had with inconcevicable hazard reached the shore, were of infinite service in preventing the others from driving out to sea, as also in dragging them athwart the billows, to the beach : by which means, every man was finally saved. With the same presence of mind to take advantage of circumstances, and the same precaution to prevent confusion, on similar occasions, how many valuable lives, prematurely lost, might have been preserved as blessings to their families, their friends and their country ! As soon as all were landed, Lieutenant Colonel Putnam fortified his camp, that he might not be exposed to insult from the inhabitants of the neighboring districts, or from those of Carthagena, who were but twenty-four miles distant. Here the party remained unmolested several days, until the storm had so much abated as to permit the convoy to take them off. They soon joined the troops before the Havanna, who, having been several weeks in that unhealthy climate, already began to grow extremely sickly.

The opportune arrival of the provincial reinforcement, in perfect health, contributed not a little to forward the works, and hasten the reduction of that important place. But the provincials suffered so mis-

erably by sickness, afterwards, that very few ever returned to their native land again.

Although a general peace among European powers was ratified in 1763, yet the savages, on our western frontiers, still continued their hostilities. After they had taken several posts, General Bradstreet was sent in 1764 with an army against them. Colonel Putnam, then, for the first time, appointed to the command of a regiment, was on the expedition; as was the Indian chief, (whom I have several times had occasion to mention as his capturer,) at the head of one hundred Cochnawaga warriors. Before General Bradstreet reached Detroit, which the savages invested, captain D'Ell, the faithful friend and intrepid fellow-soldier of Colonel Putnam, had been slain in a desperate sally. He having been detached with five hundred men, in 1763, by General Amherst, to raise the siege, found means of throwing the succor into the fort. But the garrison (commanded by Major Gladwine, a brave and sensible officer) had been so much weakened, by the lurking and insidious mode of war practised by the savages, that not a man could be spared to co-operate in an attack upon them. The commandant would even have dissuaded captain D'Ell from the attempt,

on account of the great disparity in numbers; but the latter, relying on the discipline and courage of his men, replied, "God forbid that I should "ever disobey the orders of my general," and immediately disposed them for action. It was obstinate and bloody. But the vastly superior number of the savages, enabled them to enclose captain D'Ell's party on every side, and compelled him, finally, to fight his way, in retreating from one stone house to another. Having halted to breathe a moment, he saw one of his bravest sergeants lying at a small distance, wounded through the thigh, and wallowing in his blood. Whereupon he desired some of the men to run and bring the sergeant to the house, but they declined it. Then declaring, "that he never would leave so brave a soldier in the field to be tortured by the savages," he ran and endeavored to help him up—at the instant, a volley of shot dropped them both dead together. The party continued retreating, from house to house, until they regained the fort; where it was found, the conflict had been so sharp, and lasted so long, that only fifty men remained alive of the five hundred who had sallied.

Upon the arrival of General Bradstreet, the savages saw that all further efforts, in arms, would be in vain, and, accordingly,

after many fallacious proposals for a peace, and frequent tergiversations in the negotiation, they concluded a treaty, which ended the war in America.

Colonel Putnam, at the expiration of ten years from his first receiving a commission, after having seen as much service, endured as many hardships, encountered as many dangers, and acquired as many laurels, as any officer of his rank, with great satisfaction laid aside his uniform and returned to his plough. The various and uncommon scenes of war in which he had acted a respectable part; his intercourse with the world, and intimacy with some of the first characters in the army, joined with occasional reading, had not only brought into view whatever talents he possessed from nature, but, at the same time, had extended his knowledge and polished his manners to a considerable degree. Not having become inflated with pride or forgetful of his old connexions, he had the good will of his fellow-citizens. No character stood fairer in public eye for integrity, bravery, and patriotism. He was employed in several offices in his own town, and not unfrequently elected to represent it in the general assembly. The year after his return to private life, the mind of men were strangely agitated, by an attempt of the British par-

liament to introduce the memorable Stamp Act in America. This germe policy, whose growth was repressed by the moderate temperature in which it was kept by some administrations, did not fully disclose its fruit until nearly eleven years afterwards.

On the twenty-second day of March, 1765, the Stamp Act received the royal assent. It was to take place in America on the first day of November following. This innovation spread a sudden and universal alarm. The political pulse in the province, from *Maine* to *Georgia*, throbbed in sympathy. The assemblies, in most of these colonies, that they might oppose it legally and in concert, appointed delegates to confer together on the subject. This first congress met, early in October, at New York. They agreed upon a declaration of rights and grievances of the colonists: together with separate addresses to the king, lords, and commons of Great Britain. In the mean time the people had determined, in order to prevent the stamped paper from being distributed, that the stamp masters should not enter on the execution of their office. That appointment, in Connecticut, had been conferred upon Mr. Ingersol, a very dignified, sensible, and learned native of the colony, who, upon being solicited to resign, did not in the first instance, give a

satisfactory answer. In consequence of which, a great number of the substantial yeomanry, on horseback, furnished with provisions for themselves, and provender for their horses, assembled in the eastern countries, and began their march for New Haven, to receive the resignation of Mr. Ingersol. A junction with another body was to have been formed in Branford.—But having learned at Hartford, that Mr. Ingersol would be in town the next day to claim protection from the assembly, they took quarters there, and kept out patrols during the whole night, to prevent his arrival without their knowledge. The succeeding morning they resumed their march and met Mr. Ingersol in Wethersfield.—They told him their business, and he, after some little hesitation, mounted on a table, and read his resignation. That finished, the multitude desired him to cry out, "liberty and property," three times; which he did, and was answered by three loud huzzas. He then dined with some of the principal men at a tavern, by whom he was treated with great politeness, and afterwards was escorted by about five hundred horse to Hartford, where he again read his resignation amidst the unbounded acclamations of the people. I have chosen to style this collection the *yeomanry*, the

multitude, or the *people*, because I could not make use of the English word *mob*, (which generally signifies a disorderly concurrence of the rabble) without conveying an erroneous idea. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the people, their objects being effected, without offering disturbance, dispersed to their homes.

Colonel Putnam, who instigated the people to these measures, was prevented from attending by accident. But he was deputed soon after, with two other gentlemen to wait on Governor Fitch, on the same subject. The questions of the governor, and answers of Putnam, will serve to indicate the spirit of the times. After some conversation, the governor asked "What shall I do, if the stamped paper should be sent to me by the king's authority" Putnam replied, "Lock it up until we shall visit you again." "And what will you do then?" "We shall expect you to give us the key of the room, in which it is deposited; and if you think fit, in order to screen yourself from blame, you may forewarn us upon our peril not to enter the room."—And what will you do afterwards?"—"Send it safely back again." But if I should refuse admission?" "In such a case, your house will be levelled with the dust in five minutes." It was supposed

that a report of this conversation, was one reason why the stamped paper was never sent from New York to Connecticut.

Such unanimity in the provincial assemblies, and decision in the yeomanry, carried beyond the Atlantic a conviction of the inexpediency of attempting to enforce the new revenue system. The stamp act being repealed, and the measures in a manner quieted, Colonel Putnam continued to labor with his own hands at farming, without interruption, except (for a little time) by the loss of the first joint of his right thumb from one accident, and the compound fracture of his right thigh from another—that thigh being rendered nearly an inch shorter than the left, occasioned him ever after to limp in his walk.

In speaking of the troubles that ensued, I not only omit to say any thing on the obnoxious claim asserted in the British declaratory act, the continuation of the duty on tea, the attempt to obtrude that article upon the Americans, the abortion of this project, the Boston port bill, the alteration of the charter of Massachusetts, and other topics of universal notoriety; but even waive all discussions of irritations on one part, and supplications on the other, which preceded the war between Great Britain and her colonies on this continent. It will

ever be acknowledged by those who were best acquainted with facts, and it should be made known to posterity, that that king of England had not, in his extensive dominions, subjects more loyal, more dutiful, or more zealous for his glory, than the Americans; and that nothing short of a melancholy persuasion, that the "measures which for many years had been systematically pursued by his ministers, were calculated to subvert their constitutions," could have dissolved their powerful attachment to that kingdom, which they fondly called their *parent country.* Here, without digression, to develope the cause, or describe the progress, it may suffice to observe, the dispute now verged precipitately to an awful crisis. Most considerate men foresaw it would terminate in blood. But, rather than suffer the chains (which they believed in preparation) to be riveted, they nobly determined to sacrifice their lives. In vain did they deprecate the infatuation of those transatlantic counsels which drove them to deeds of desperation. Convinced of the rectitude of their cause, and doubtful of the issue, they felt the most painful solicitude for the fate of their country, on contemplating the superior strength of the nation with which it was to contend. America, thinly inhabited, under thirteen distinct colonial

governments, could have little hope of success, but from the protection of Providence, and the unconquerable spirit of freedom which pervaded the mass of the people: it is true, since the peace, she had surprisingly increased in wealth and population—but the resources of Britain almost exceeded credibility or conception. It is not wonderful then, that some good citizens, of weaker nerves, recoiled at the prospect; while others, who had been officers in the late war, or who had witnessed, by travelling, the force of Great Britain, stood aloof.

All eyes were now turned to find the men, who possessed of military experience, would dare, in the approaching hour of severest trial, to lead their undisciplined fellow-citizens to battle—for none were so stupid as not to comprehend that want of success would have involved the leaders in the punishment of rebellion. Putnam was among the first and most conspicuous who stepped forth. Although the Americans had been, by many who wished their subjugation, indiscreetly as indiscriminately stigmatized with imputations of cowardice —he felt, he knew for himself, he was no coward; and from what he had seen and known, he believed that his countrymen, driven to the extremity of defending their rights by arms, would find no difficulty in

wiping away the ungenerous aspersion.—As he happened to be often at Boston, he held many conversations on these subjects with General Gage, the British commander-in-chief, Lord Percy, Colonel Sheriff, Colonel Small, and many officers with whom he had formerly served, who were now at the head quarters. Being often questioned "in case the dispute should proceed to hostilities, what part he would really take?" He always answered, "with his country, and that, let whatever might happen, he was prepared to abide the consequence." Being interrogated "whether *he*, who had been a witness to the prowess and victories of the British fleets and armies, did not think them equal to the conquest of a country which was not the owner of a single ship, regiment, or magazine?" He rejoined, that "he could only say, justice would be on our side, and the event with Providence: but that he had calculated, if it required six years for the combined forces of England and her colonies to conquer such a feeble country as Canada; it would at least, take a very long time for England alone to overcome her own widely extended colonies, which were much stronger than Canada: That when men fought for every thing dear; in what they believed to be the most sacred of all cau-

ses, and in their own native land, they would have great advantages over their enemies, who were not in the same situation; and that, having taken into view all circumstances, for his own part, he fully believed that America would not be so easily conquered by England, as those gentlemen seemed to expect." Being once, in particular, asked, "whether he did not seriously believe that a well appointed British army of five thousand veterans could march through the whole continent of America?" He replied briskly,—"no doubt; if they behaved civilly and paid well for every thing they wanted—but"—after a moment's pause, added—"if they should attempt it in a hostile manner, (though the American men were out of the question,) the women with their ladles and broomsticks, would knock them all on the head before they had got half way through." This was the tenor, our hero hath often told me, of these amicable interviews. And thus (as it commonly happens in disputes about future events, which depend on opinion) they parted without conviction: no more to meet in a friendly manner, until after the appeal should have been made to heaven, and the issue confirmed by the sword. In the mean time, to provide against the worst contingency, the militia in the several colonies

was sedulously trained; and those select companies, the flower of our youth, which were denominated minutemen, agreeably to the indication of their name, held themselves in readiness to march at a moment's warning.

At length the fatal day arrived, when hostilities commenced. General Gage, in the evening of the 18th of April, 1776, detached from Boston the grenadiers and light infantry of the army, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Smith, to destroy some military and other stores, deposited at Concord.

About sunrise the next morning, the detachment, on marching into Lexington, fired upon a company of militia who had just re-assembled; for having been alarmed late at night, with reports that the regulars were advancing to demolish the stores, they collected on their parade, and were dismissed with orders to re-assemble at beat of drum. It is established by the affidavits of more than thirty persons who were present, that the first fire, which killed eight of the militia, then beginning to disperse, was given by the British, without provocation. The spark of war thus kindled, ran with unexampled rapidity, and raged with unwonted violence. To repel the aggression, the people of the bordering

towns spontaneously rushed to arms, and poured their scattering shot from every convenient station upon the regulars; who, after marching to Concord, and destroying the magazine, would have found their retreat intercepted, had they not been reinforced by Lord Percy, with the battalion companies of three regiments, and a body of marines. Notwithstanding the junction, they were hard pushed, and pursued until they could find protection from their ships. Of the British, two hundred and eighty-three were killed, wounded, and taken.—The Americans had thirty-nine killed, nineteen wounded, and two made prisoners.

Nothing could exceed the celerity with which the intelligence flew every where, that blood had been shed by the British troops. The country, in motion, exhibited but one scene of hurry, preparation, and revenge. Putnam, who was ploughing when he heard the news, left his plough in the middle of the field, unyoked his team, and without waiting to change his clothes, set off for the theatre of action; but finding the British retreated to Boston, and invested by a sufficient force to watch their movements, he came back to Connectiut, levied a regiment (under authority of the legislature) and speedily returned to Cambridge. He was now promoted to be a

major general on the provincial staff, by his colony: and in a little time confirmed by congress, in the same rank, on the continental establishment.

Not long after this period, the British commander-in-chief found the means to convey a proposal privately to General Putnam, that if he would relinquish the rebel party, he might rely on being made a major general on the British establishment, and receiving a great pecuniary compensation for his services. General Putnam spurned at the offer: which, however, he thought prudent at that time to conceal from public notice.

It could scarcely have been expected, but by those credulous patriots who were prone to believe whatever they ardently desired, that officers assembled from colonies distinct in their manners and prejudices, selected from laborious occupations to command a heterogeneous crowd of their equals, compelled to be soldiers only by the spur of occasion, should long be able to preserve harmony among themselves, and subordination among their followers. As the fact would be a phenomenon, the idea was treated with mirth and mockery by the friends to the British government. Yet this unshaken embryo of a military corps, composed of militia, minutemen, vol-

unteers and levies, with a burlesque appearance of multiformity in arms, accoutrements, clothing, and conduct, at last grew into a regular army—an army, which having vindicated the rights of human nature and establised the independence of a new empire, merited and obtained the glorious distinction of the patriotic army—the patriotic army whose praises for their fortitude in adversity, bravery in battle, moderation in conquest, perseverance in supporting the cruel extremities of hunger and nakedness without a murmur or sigh, as well as for their magnanimity in retiring to civil life at the moment of victory, with arms in their hands, and without any just compensation for their services, will only cease to celebrated, when time shall exist no more.

The provincial generals having received advice that the British commander in-chief designed to take possession of the heights, on the peninsula of Charlestown, detached a thousand men in the night of the 16th of June, under the orders of General Warren, to entrench themselves upon one of those eminences, named Bunker-Hill. Though retarded by accidents from beginning the work until nearly midnight, yet, by dawn of day, they had constructed a redoubt about eight rods square, and commenced a breastwork from the left to the

low grounds, which an insufferable fire from the shipping, floating batteries, and cannon on Cop's Hill, in Boston, prevented them from completing.

At mid-day, four battalions of foot, ten companies of grenadiers, ten companies of light infantry, with a proportion of artillery, commanded by Major General Howe, landed under a heavy cannonade from the ships, and advanced in three lines to the attack. The light infantry, being formed on their right, was directed to turn the left flank of the Americans; and the grenadiers, supported by two battalions, to storm the redoubt in front. Meanwhile, on application, these troops were augmented by the 47th regiment, the 1st battalion of marines, together with some companies of light infantry, and grenadiers, which formed an aggregate force of between two and three thousand men. But so difficult was it to reinforce the Americans by sending detachments across the Neck, which was raked by the cannon of the shipping, that not more than fifteen hundred men were brought into action. Few instances can be produced in the annals of mankind, where soldiers who never had before faced an enemy, or heard the whistling of a ball, behaved with such deliberate and persevering valor. It was not until after the gren-

adiers had been twice repulsed to their boats, General Warren slain, his troops exhausted of their amunition, their lines in a manner enfiladed by artillery, and the redoubt half filled with British regulars, that the word was given to retire. In that forlorn condition, the spectacle was astonishing as new, to behold these undisciplined men, most of them without bayonets, disputing with the butt end of their muskets against the British bayonet, and receding in sullen despair. Still the light infantry, on their left, would certainly have gained their rear, and exterminated this gallant corps, had not a body of four hundred Connecticut men, with the captains Knoulton and Chester, after forming a temporary breastwork by pulling up one post and rail fence, and putting it upon another, performed prodigies of bravery. They held the enemy at bay, until the main body had relinquished the heights, and then retreated across the Neck, with more regularity and less loss than could have been expected. The British, who effected nothing the destruction of Charlestown by a wanton conflagration, had more than one half of their whole number killed and wounded: the Americans, only three hundred and fifty-five killed, wounded, and missing. In

this battle, the presence and example of General Putnam, who arrived with the reinforcement, were not less conspicuous than useful. He did every thing that an intrepid and experienced officer could accomplish. The enemy pursued to Winter Hill —Putnam made a stand, and drove them back under cover of their ships.

After this action, the British strongly fortified themselves on the peninsulas of Boston and Charlestown: while the provincials remained posted in the circumjacent country, in such manner as to form a blockade. In the beginning of July, General Washington, who had been constituted by Congress commander in chief of the American forces, arrived at Cambridge to take the command. Having formed the army into three grand divisions, consisting of about twelve regiments each, he appointed Major General Ward to command the right wing, Major General Lee the left wing, and Major General Putnam the reserve.—General Putnam's alertness, in accelerating the construction of the necessary defences, was particularly noticed and highly approved by the commander in chief.

About the 20th of July, the declaration of Congress, setting forth the reasons of their taking up arms, was proclaimed at the head of the several divisions. It con-

cluded with these patriotic and noble sentiments: "In our own native land, in defence of the freedom that is our birthright, and which we ever enjoyed until the late violation of it; for the protection of our property, acquired solely by the honest industry of our forefathers and ourselves; against violence actually offered, we have taken up arms. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed, and not before.

"With an humble confidence in the mercies of the supreme and impartial Judge and ruler of the universe, we most devoutly implore his divine goodness to conduct us happily through this great conflict, to dispose our adversaries to reconciliation on reasonable terms, and thereby to relieve the empire from the calamities of civil war." As soon as these memorable words were pronounced to General Putnam's division, which he had ordered to be paraded on Prospect Hill, they shouted in three huzzas aloud, Amen! Whereat (a cannon from the fort being fired at a signal) the new *standard*, lately sent from Connecticut, was suddenly seen to rise and unrol itself to the wind. On one side was inscribed in large letters of gold, "AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN," and on the other were delineated the armo-

rial bearings of Connecticut, which, without supporters or crest, consist, unostentatiously, of *Three Vines*, with this motto: "*Qui transtuli sustinet*;" alluding to the pious confidence our forefathers placed in the protection of heaven, on those three allegoric scions—KNOWLEDGE, LIBERTY, RELIGION—which they had been instrumental in transplanting to America.

The strength of position on the enemy's part, and want of amunition on ours, prevented operations of magnitude from being attempted. Such diligence was used in fortifying our camps, and such precautions adopted to prevent surprise, as to ensure tranquility to the troops during the winter. In the spring, a position was taken so menacing to the enemy, as to cause them, on the 17th of March, 1776, to abandon Boston: not without considerable precipitation and dereliction of royal stores.

Notwithstanding the war had now raged in other parts with unaccustomed severity for nearly a year, yet the British ships at New York (one of which had once fired upon the town to intimidate the inhabitants) found the means of being supplied with fresh water and provisions. General Putnam resolved to adopt effectual measures for putting a period to this in-

tercourse, and accordingly expressed his prohibition in the most pointed terms.

Nearly at the same moment, a detachment of a thousand continentals was sent to occupy Governour's Island, a regiment to fortify Red Hook, and some companies of riflemen to the Jersey shore. Of two boats (belonging to two armed vessels) which attempted to take on board fresh water from the watering place on Staten Island, one was driven off (by the riflemen) with two or three seamen killed in it; and the other captured with thirteen. A few days afterwards, Captain Vandeput, of the Asia man of war, the senior officer ships on this station, finding the intercourse with the shore interdicted, their limits contracted, and that no good purposes could be answered by remaining there, sailed with all the armed vessels out of the harbor. These arrangements and transactions, joined to an unremitting attention to the completion of the defences, gave full scope to the activity of General Putnam until the arrival of General Washington, which happened about the middle of April.

The commander in chief, in his first public orders, "complimented the officers who had successively commanded at New York, and returned his thanks to them as well as to the officers and soldiers under their com-

mand, for the many works of defence which had been so expeditiously erected: at the same time he expressed an expectation that the same spirit of zeal for the service, would continue to animate their future conduct." Putnam who was then the only major-general with the main army, had still a chief agency in forwarding the fortifications: and, with the assistance of the brigadiers Spencer and Lord Stirling, in assigning to the different corps their alarm posts.

It was the latter end of June, when the British fleet, which had been at Halifax, waiting for reinforcements from Europe, began to arrive at New York. To obstruct its passage, some marine preparations had been made. General Putnam to whom the direction of the whale-boats, fire-rafts, flat-bottomed boats, and armed vessels, was committed, afforded his patronage to a project for destroying the enemy's shipping, by explosion. A machine altogether different from any thing hitherto devised by the art of man, had been invented by Mr. David Bushnell, for submarine navigation, which was found to answer the purpose perfectly, of rowing horizontally at any given depth under water, and of rising or sinking at pleasure. To this machine (called the American Turtle) was attached a magazine of

powder, which was intended to be fastened under the bottom of a ship, with a driving screw, in such sort that the same stroke which disengaged it from the machine, should put the internal clockwork in motion. This being done, the ordinary operation of a gun lock, at the distance of half an hour, an hour, or any determinate time, would cause the powder to explode, and leave the effects to the common laws of nature. The simplicity, yet combination, discovered in the mechanism of this wonderful machine, were acknowledged by those skilled in physics, and particularly hydraulics, to be not less ingenious than novel. The inventor, whose constitution was too feeble to permit him to perform the labor of rowing the turtle, had taught his brother to manage it with perfect dexterity; but unfortunately his brother fell sick of a fever just before the arrival of the fleet.—Recourse was therefore had to a sergeant in the Connecticut troops; who having received whatever instructions could be communicated to him in a short time, went too late in the night, with all the apparatus, under the bottom of the Eagle, a sixty-four gun ship, on board of which the British admiral, Lord Howe, commanded. In coming up, the screw that had been calculated to perforate the copper sheathing, unluckily

struck against some iron plates, where the rudder is connected with the stern. This accident, added to the strength of tide which prevailed, and the want of adequate skill in the sergeant, occasioned such delay, that the dawn began to appear, whereupon he abandoned the magazine to chance, and, after gaining a proper distance, for the sake of expedition, rowed on the surface towards the town. General Putnam, who had been on the wharf anxiously expecting the result, from the first glimmering of light, beheld the machine near Governor's Island, and sent a whaleboat to bring it on shore. In about twenty minutes afterwards, the magazine exploded, and blew a vast column of water to an amazing height in the air. As the whole business had been kept an inviolable secret, he was not a little diverted with the various conjectures, whether this stupendous noise was produced by a bomb, a meteor, a waterspout, or an earthquake. Other operations of a most serious nature rapidly succeeded, and prevented a repetition of the experiment.

On the twenty-second day of August the van of the British landed on Long Island, and was soon followed by the whole army, except one brigade of Hessians, a small body of British, and some convalescents, left on Staten Island. Our troops on Long

Island had been commanded during the summer by General Greene, who was now sick; and General Putnam took the command but two days before the battle of Flatbush. The instructions to him (pointing in the first place to decisive expedients for suppressing the scattering, unmeaning, and wasteful fire of our men) contained regulations for the service of the guards, the brigadiers and the field officers of the day; for the appointment and encouragement of proper scouts; as well as for keeping the men constantly at their posts; for preventing the burning of buildings, (except it should be necessary for military purposes,) and for preserving private property from pillage and destruction. To these regulations were added, in a more diffuse though not less spirited and prefessional style, reflections on the distinction of an army from a mob; with exhortations for the soldiers to conduct themselves manfully in such a cause, and for their commander to oppose the enemy's approach with detachments of his best troops: while he should endeavor to render their advance more difficult by constructing abattis, and to entrap their parties by forming ambuscades. General Putnam was within the lines, when an engagement took place on the 27th, between the British army and our advanced corps,

in which we lost about a thousand men in killed and missing, with the Generals Sullivan and Lord Stirling made prisoners. But our men, though attacked on all sides, fought with great bravery; and the enemy's loss was not light.

The unfortunate battle of Long Island, the masterly retreat from thence, and the actual passage of part of the hostile fleet in the East River above the town, precluded the evacuation of New York. A promotion of four majors general, and six brigadiers, had previously been made by Congress. After the retreat from Long Island, the main army, consisting, for the moment, of sixty battalions, (of which twenty were continental, the residue levies and militia,) was, conformably to the exigencies of the service, rather than to the rules of war, formed into fourteen brigades. Major General Putnam commanded the right grand division of five brigades, the Majors General Spencer and Greene the centre of six brigades; and Major General Heath the left, which was posted near Kingsbridge, and composed of two brigades.—The whole never amounted to twenty thousand effective men; while the British and German forces under Sir William Howe, exceeded twenty-two thousand: indeed, the minister had asserted in parlia-

ment, that they would consist of more than thirty thousand. Our two centre divisions, both commanded by General Spencer in the sickness of General Greene, moved towards Mt. Washington, Harlem Heights, and Horn's Hook, as soon as the final resolution was taken, in a council of war, on the 12th of September, to abandon the city. That event, thus circumstanced, took effect a few days after.

On Sunday the fifteenth, the British, after sending three ships of war up the North River to Bloomingdale, and keeping up for some hours a severe cannonade on our lines, from those already in the East River, landed in force at Turtle Bay: our new levies, commanded by a state brigadier general, fled without making resistance. Two brigades of general Putnam's division, ordered to their support, notwithstanding the exertion of their brigadiers, and of the commander in chief himself, conducted themselves in the same shameful manner. His excellency then ordered the Heights of Harlem, a strong position, to be occupied. Thither the forces in the vicinity, as well as the fugitives, repaired. In the mean time General Putnam, with the remainder of his command, and the ordinary outposts, was in the city. After having caused the brigades to begin their retreat by the route

of Bloomingdale, in order to avoid the enemy, who were then in the possession of the main road leading to Kingsbridge, he galloped to call off the pickets and guards. Having myself been a volunteer in his division, and acting adjutant to the last regiment that left the city, I had frequent opportunities that day of beholding him, for the purpose of issuing orders and encouraging the troops, flying on his horse, covered with foam, wherever his presence was most necessary. Without his extraordinary exertions, the guards must have been inevitably lost, and it is probable the entire corps would have been cut in pieces.—When we were not far from Bloomingdale, an aid-de-camp came from him at full speed, to inform that a column of British infantry was descending upon our right. Our rear was soon fired upon, and the colonel of our regiment, whose order was just communicated for the front to file off to the left, was killed on the spot. With no other loss, we joined the army, after dark, on the Heights of Harlem.

Before our brigades came in, we were given up for lost by all our friends. So critical indeed was our situation, and narrow the gap by which we escaped, that the instant we had passed, the enemy closed it by extending their line from river to

river. Our men who had been fifteen hours under arms, harrassed by marching and countermarching, in consequence of incessant alarms, exhausted as they were by heat and thirst, (for the day proved insupportably hot, and few or none had canteens, insomuch that some died at the brooks where they drank,) if attacked, could have made but feeble resistance.

That night our soldiers, excessively fatigued by the sultry march of the day, their clothes wet by a severe shower of rain that succeeded towards the evening, their blood chilled by the cold wind that produced a sudden change in the temperature of the air, and their hearts sunk within them by the loss of baggage, artillery, and works, in which they had been taught to put great confidence, lay upon their arms, covered only by the clouds of an uncomfortable sky. To retrieve our disordered affairs, and prevent the enemy from profiting by them, no exertion was relaxed, no vigilance remitted, on the part of our higher officers. The regiments which had been least exposed to fatigue that day furnished the necessary pickets to secure the army from surprise. Those, whose military lives had been short and unpractised, felt enough besides lassitude of body to disquiet the tranquility of their repose. Nor had those who

were older in the service, and of more experience, any subject for consolation. The warmth of enthusiasm seemed to be extinguished. The force of discipline had not sufficiently occupied its place, to give men a dependence upon each other. We were apparently about to reap the bitter fruits of that jealous policy, which some leading men (with the best motives) had sown in our federal councils, when they caused the mode to be adopted for carrying on the war detachments of militia, from apprehension that an established continental army, after defending the country against foreign invasion, might subvert its liberty themselves. Paradoxicol as it will appear, it may be profitable to be known to posterity, that, while our very existence as an independent people was in question, the patriotic jealousy for the safety of our freedom had been carried to such a virtuous, but dangerous excess, as well nigh to preclude the attainment of our independence. Happily, that limited and hazardous system soon gave room enlightened and salutary. This may be attributed to the reiterated arguments, the open remonstrances, and the confidential communications of the commander-in-chief; who, though not apt to despair of the republic, on this occasion expressed in terms of unusual despondency.

He declared in his letters, that he found, to his utter astonishment and mortification, that no reliance could be placed on a great proportion of his present troops, and that, unless efficient measures for establishing a permanent force should be speedily pursued, we had every reason to fear the final ruin of our cause.

Next morning several parties appeared upon the plains in our front. On receiving this intelligence, General Washington rode quickly to the outpost, for the purpose of preparing against an attack, if the enemy should advance with that design.—Lieutenant Colonel Knowlton's rangers, a fine selection from the eastern regiments, who had been skirmishing with an advanced party, came in and informed the general that a body of British were under cover of a small eminence at no considerable distance. His excellency, willing to raise our men from their dejection by the splendor of some little success, ordered Lieut. Colonel Knowlton with his rangers, and Major Leitch with three companies of Weed's regiment of Virginians, to gain their rear, while appearances should be made of an attack in front. As soon as the enemy saw the party sent to decoy them, they ran precipitately down the hill, took possession of some fences and bushes, and commenced a

brisk fire at long shot. Unfortunately, Knowlton and Leitch made their onset rather in flank than in rear. The enemy changed their front, and the skirmish at once became close and warm. Major Leitch having received three balls through his side, was soon borne from the field, and Colonel Knowlton, who had distinguished himself so gallantly at the battle of Bunker Hill, was mortally wounded immediately after. Their men, however, undaunted by these disasters, stimulated with the thirst of revenge for the loss of their leaders, and conscious of acting under the eye of the commander in chief, maintained the conflict with uncommon spirit and perseverance.—But the general, seeing them in need of support, advanced part of the Maryland regiments of Griffith and Richardson, together with some detachments from such eastern corps as chanced to be most contiguous to the place of action. Our troops this day, without exception, behaved with the greatest intrepidity. So bravely did they repulse the British, that Sir William Howe moved his reserve with two field pieces, a battalion of Hessian grenadiers, and a company of chasseurs, to succor his retreating troops. General Washington, not willing to draw on a general action, declined pressing the pursuit. In this engagement were the se-

cond and third battalions of light infantry, the 42d British regiment, and the German chasseurs, of whom eight officers and upwards of seventy privates were wounded, and our people buried nearly twenty, who were left dead on the field. We had about forty wounded: our loss in killed, except of two valuable officers, was very inconsiderable.

An advantage, so trivial in itself, produced, in event, a surprising and almost incredible effect upon the whole army. Among the troops not engaged, who, during the action, were throwing earth from the new trenches, with an alacrity that indicated that indicated a determination to defend them—every visage was seen to brighten, and to assume, instead of the gloom of despair, the glow of animation. This change, no less sudden than happy, left little room to doubt that the men, who ran the day before at the sight of an enemy, would now, to wipe away the stain of that disgrace, and to recover the confidence of their general, have conducted themselves in a very different manner. Some alteration was made in the distribution of corps, to prevent the British from gaining either flank in the succeeding night. Gen. Putnam, who commanded on the right, was directed, in orders, in case the enemy should attempt to

force the pass, to apply for a reinforcement to General Spencer, who commanded on the left.

General Putnam, who was too good a husbandman himself not to have a respect for the labors and improvements of others, strenuously seconded the views of the commander in chief in preventing the devastation of farms, and the violation of private property; for, under pretext that the property in this quarter belonged to friends to the British goverment, as, indeed, it mostly did, a spirit of rapine and licentiousness began to prevail, which, unless repressed in the beginning, foreboded, besides the subversion of discipline, the disgrace and defeat of our arms.

Our new defences now becoming so strong as not to admit of insult with impunity, and Sir William Howe, not choosing to place too much at risk in attacking us in front, on the 12th, day of October, leaving Lord Piercy with one Hessian and two British brigades in his lines at Harlem, to cover New York, embarked with the main body of his army with an intention of landing at Frog's Neck, situated near the town of Westchester, and little more than a league above the communication called Kingsbridge, which connects New York island with the main land. There was no-

thing to oppose him; and he effected his debarkation by nine o'clock in the morning. The same policy of keeping our army as compact as possible; the same system of avoiding being forced into action; and the same precaution to prevent the interruption of supplies, reinforcements, or retreat, that lately dictated the evacuation of New York, now induced Gen. Washington to move towards the strong grounds in the upper part of Westchester county.

About the same time, General Putnam was sent to the western side of the Hudson, to provide against an irruption into the Jerseys, and soon after to Philadelphia, to put that town into a posture of defence.—Thither I attended him. Without stopping to dilate on the subsequent incidents, that might swell a folio, though here compressed to a single paragraph: without attempting to give, in detail, the skilful retrogade movements of our commander in chief, who after detaching a garrison for Fort Washington, by pre-occupying with extemporaneous redoubts and entrenchments, the ridges from Mile Square to White Plains, and by folding one brigade behind another in rear of those ridges that run parallel with the Sound, and brought off all his artillery, stores, and sick, in the face of a superior foe: without commenting on the partial

and equivocal battle fought near the last mentioned village, or the cause why the British, then in full force, (for the last of the Hessian infantry and British lighthorse had just arrived,) did not more seriously endeavor to induce a general engagement: without journalizing their military manœuvres in falling back to Kingsbridge, capturing fort Washington, Fort Lee, and marching through the Jerseys: without enumerating the instances of rapine, murder, lust, and devastation, that marked their progress, and filled our bosoms with horror and indignation: without describing how a division of our dissolving army, with General Washington, driven before them beyond the Delaware: without painting the naked and forlorn condition of these much-injured men, amidst the rigors of an inclement season, and without even sketching the consternation that seized the states at this perilous period—when Gen. Lee (in leading from the north a small reinforcement to our troops) was himself taken prisoner by surprise: when every thing seemed decidedly declining to the last extremity, and when every prospect but served to augment the depression of despair—until the genius of one man in one day, at a single stroke, wrested from the veteran battalions of Britain and Germany, the fruits acquired by

the total operations of a successful campaign, and reanimated the expiring hope of a whole nation, by the glorious enterprise at Trenton.

While the hostile forces, rashly inflated with pride by a series of uninterrupted successes, and fondly dreaming that a period would soon be put to their labors by the completion of their conquests, had been pursuing the wretched remnants of a disbanded army to the banks of the Delaware, General Putnam was diligently employed in fortifying Philadelphia, the capture of which appeared indubitably to be their principal object. Here, by authority and example, he strove to conciliate contending factions, and to excite the citizens to uncommon efforts in defence of every thing interesting to freemen. His personal industry was unparalleled. His orders with respect to extinguishing accidental fires, advancing the public works, as well as in regard to other important objects, were perfectly military and proper. But his health was, for a while, impaired by his unrelaxed exertions.

The commander in chief, having, in spite of all obstacles, made good his retreat over the Delaware, wrote to General Putnam, (from his camp above the falls of Trenton, on the very day he recrossed the river to

surprise the Hessians,) expressed his satisfaction at the re-establishment of that general's health, and informing, that if he had not himself been well convinced before of the enemy's intention to possess themselves of Philadelphia, as soon as the frost should form ice strong enough to transport them and their artillery across the Delaware, he had how obtained an intercepted letter which placed the matter beyond a doubt. He added, that if the citizens of Philadelphia had any regard for the town, not a moment's time was to be lost until it should be put in the best possible posture of defence: but lest that should not be done, he directed the removal of all the public stores, except provisions necessary for immediate use, to places of greater security. He queried whether, if a party of militia could be sent from Philadelphia to support those in the Jerseys about Mount Holly, it would not serve to save them from submission? At the same time, he signified, as his opinion, the expediency of sending an active and influential officer to inspirit the people, to encourage them to assemble in arms, as well to keep those already in arms from disbanding; and concluded by manifesting a wish that Colonel Forman, whom he desired to see for this purpose, might be employed on the service.

The enemy had vainly, as incautiously, imagined, that to overrun was to conquer. They had even carried their presumption on our extreme weakness, and expected submission so far, as to attempt covering the country, through which they had marched, with an extensive chain of cantonments. That link, which the post at Trenton supplied, consisted of a Hessian brigade of infantry, a company of chasseurs, a squadron of light dragoons, and six field pieces. At eight o'clock in the morning of the 26th day of December, Gen. Washington, with twenty-four hundred men, came upon them, (after they had paraded,) took one thousand prisoners, and repassed the same day without loss to his encampment. As soon as the troops were recovered from their excessive fatigue, Gen. Washington recrossed a second time to Trenton. On the second of January, Lord Cornwallis, with the bulk of the British army, advanced upon him, cannonaded his post, and offered him battle: but the two armies being separated by the interposition of Trenton Creek, Gen. Washington had it in his option to decline an engagement; which he did for the sake of striking the masterly stroke that he then meditated. Having kindled frequent fires around his camp, posted faithful men to keep them burning,

and advanced sentinels whose fidelity might be relied upon, he decamped silently after dark, and by a circuitous route reached Princeton at nine o'clock the next morning. The noise of the firing, by which he killed and captured between five and six hundred of the British brigade in that town, was the first notice Cornwallis had of this stolen march. General Washington, the project successfully accomplished, instantly filed off for the mountainous grounds of Morristown. Meanwhile, his lordship, who arrived by a forced march at Princeton, just as he had left it, finding the Americans could not be overtaken, proceeded without halting, to Brunswick.

On the 5th of January, 1777, from Pluckemin, Gen. Washington dispatched an account of this second success to Gen. Putnam, and ordered him to move immediately with all his troops to Crosswicks, for the purpose of co-operating in recovering the Jerseys: an event which the present fortunate juncture (while the enemy were yet panic-struck) appeared to promise. The general cautioned him, however, if the enemy should still continue at Brunswick, to guard with great circumspection against a surprise: especially as they, having recently suffered by two attacks, could scarcely avoid being edged with resentment to at-

tempt retaliation. His excellency farther advised him to give out his strength to be twice as great as it was: to forward on all the baggage and scattering men belonging to the division destined for Morristown; to employ as many spies as he should think proper; to keep a number of horsemen, in the dress of the country, going constantly backwards and forwards on the same secret service; and lastly, if he should discover any intention or motion of the enemy that could be depended upon, and might be of consequence, not to fail in conveying the intelligence as rapidly as possible, by express, to head-quarters. Gen. Putnam was soon after to take post at Princeton, where he continued until the spring. He had never with him more than a few hundred troops, though he was only at fifteen miles distance from the enemy's strong garrison of Brunswick. At one period, from a sudden diminution, occasioned by the tardiness of the militia turning out to rep'ace those whose time of service was expired, he had fewer men for duty than he had miles of frontier to guard. Nor was the commander in chief in a more eligible situation. It is true, that while he had scarcely the semblance of an army, under the specious parade of a park of artillery, and the imposing appearance of his head-quarters, estab-

lished at Morristown, he kept up in the eyes of his countrymen, as well as in the opinion of his enemy, the appearance of no contemptible force. Future generations will find difficulty in conceiving how a handful of new levied men and militia, who were necessitated to be inoculated for the small pox in the course of the winter, could be subdivided and posted so advantageously, as effectually to protect the inhabitants, confine the enemy, curtail their forage, and beat up their quarters, without sustaining a single disaster.

In the battle of Princeton, Captain McPherson, of the 19th British regiment, a very worthy Scotchman, was desperately wounded in the lungs, and left with the dead. Upon Gen. Putnam's arrival there, he found him languishing in extreme distress, without a surgeon, without a single accommodation, and without a friend to solace the sinking spirit in the gloomy hour of death. He visited, and immediately caused every possible comfort to be administered to him. M'Pherson, who, contrary to all appearances, recovered, after having demonstrated to Gen. Putnam the dignified sense of obligations which a generous mind wishes not to conceal, one day in familiar conversation demanded—"Pray, sir, what countryman are you?" "An American,"

answered Putnam. "Not a Yankee!" said the other. "A full blooded one," replied the general." "By G—d, I am sorry for that," rejoined M'Pherson; "I did not think there could be so much goodness and generosity in an American, or indeed in any body but a Scotchman."

While the recovery of Captain M'Pherson was doubtful, he desired that General Putnam would permit a friend in the British army at Brunswick to come and assist him in making his will. General Putnam, who had then only fifty men in his whole command, was sadly embarrassed by the proposition. On the one hand he was not content that a British officer should have an opportunity to spy out the weakness of his post—on the other, it was scarcely in his nature to refuse complying with a dictate of humanity. He luckily bethought himself of an expedient, which he hastened to put in practice. A flag of truce was despatched with Captain M'Pherson's request, but under an injunction not to return with his friend until after dark. In the evening, lights were placed in all the rooms of the college, and in every apartment of the vacant houses throughout the town. During the whole night the fifty men, sometimes in small detachments, were marched from different quarters by the house in

which M'Pherson lay. Afterwards it was known, that the officer who came on the visit, at his return, reported, that General Putnam's army, upon the most moderate calculation, could not consist of less than four or five thousand men.

During this period General Putnam having received unquestionable intelligence, that a party of refugees, in British pay, had taken post, and were erecting a kind of redoubt at Lawrence's Neck, sent Colonel Nelson with one hundred and fifty militia to surprise them. That officer conducted with so much secrecy and decision, as to take the whole prisoners. These refugees, commanded by Major Stockton, belonged to Skinner's brigade, and amounted to sixty in number.

In the latter part of February, General Washington advised General Putnam, that in consequence of a large accession of strength from New York to the British army at Brunswick, it was to be apprehended they would soon make a forward movement towards the Delaware; in which case the latter was directed to cross the river with his actual force, to assume the command of the militia who might assemble, to secure the boats on the west side of the Delaware, and to facilitate the passage of the rest of the army. But the enemy did

not remove from their winter quarters until the season arrived when green forage could be supplied. In the intermediate period, the correspondence on the part of General Putnam with the commander in chief consisted chiefly of reports and inquiries concerning the treatment of some of the following descriptions of persons: either of those who came within our lines with flags and pretended flags, or who had taken protection from the enemy, or who had been reputed disaffected to our cause, or who were designed to be comprehended in the American proclamation, which required that those who had taken protections should give them to the nearest American officer, or go within the British lines. The letters of his excellency in return, generally advisory, were indicative of confidence and approbation.

When the spring had now so far advanced that it was obvious the enemy would soon take the field: the commander in chief, after desiring General Putnam to give the officers who were to relieve him at Princeton, all the information necessary for the conduct of that post, appointed that general to the command of a separate army in the Highlands of New York.

It is scarcely decided, from any documents yet published, whether the prepos-

terous plans prosecuted by the British generals in the campaign of 1777, were altogether the result of their orders from home, or whether they partially originated from the contingencies of the moment.

The system, which at the time tended to puzzle all human conjecture, when developed, served also to contradict all reasonable calculation. Certain it is, the American commander in chief was for a considerable time so perplexed with contradictory appearances, that he knew not how to distribute his troops with his usual discernment, so as to oppose the enemy with equal prospect of success in different parts. The gathering tempest menaced the northern frontiers, the posts in the Highlands, and the city of Philadelphia: but it was still doubtful where the fury of the storm would fall. At one time Sir William Howe was forcing his way by land to Philadelphia, at another relinquishing the Jerseys, at a third facing round to make a sudden inroad, then embarking with all the forces that could be spared from New York, and then putting out to sea—at the very moment when General Burgoyne had reduced Ticonderoga, and seemed to require a co-operation in another quarter.

It was not wonderful that many tories were able, undiscovered, to penetrate far

into the country, and even to go with letters or messages from one British army to another. The inhabitants who were well affected to the royal cause, afforded them every possible support, and their own knowledge of the different routes gave them a farther facility in performing their peregrinations. Sometimes active loyalists, (as the tories wished to denominate themselves) who had gone into the British posts, and received promises of commissions upon enlisting a certain number of soldiers, came back again secretly, with recruiting instructions. Sometimes these and others who came from the enemy within the verge of our camps, were detected, and condemned to death in conformity to the usage of war. But the British generals, who had an unlimited supply of money at their command, were able to pay with so much liberality, that emissaries could always be found. Still, it is thought that the intelligence of the American commandants was, at least, equally accurate; notwithstanding the poverty of their military chest and the inability of rewarding mercenary agents for secret services, in proportion to their risk and merit.

A person by the name of Palmer, who was a lieutenant in the tory new levies, was detected in the camp at Peekskill.—

Governor Tryon, who commanded the new levies, reclaimed him as a British officer, representing the heinous crime of condemning a man commissioned by his majesty, and threatened vengeance in case he should be executed. General Putnam wrote the following pithy reply:

"Sir,

"Nathan Palmer, a lieutenant in your king's service, was taken in my camp as a *spy*—he was tried as a *spy*—he was condemned as a *spy*—and you may rest assured, sir, he shall be hanged as a *spy*.

I have the honor to, &c.
ISRAEL PUTNAM.

"*His Excellency*,
Governor Tryon."

"P. S. Afternoon.
"He is hanged."

Important transactions soon occurred.—Not long after the two brigades had marched from Peekskill to Pennsylvania, a reinforcement arrived at N. York from Europe. Appearances indicated that offensive operations would follow. General Putnam, having been reduced in force to a single brigade in the field, and a single regiment in garrison at Fort Montgomery, repeated-

ly informed the commander-in-chief that the pots committed to his charge must in all probability be lost, in case an attempt should be made upon them: and that, circumstanced as he was, he could not be responsible for the consequences. His situation was certainly to be lamented, but it was not in the power of the commander-in-chief to alter it, except by authorizing him to call upon the militia for aid—an aid always precarious, and often so tardy, as, when obtained, to be of no utility.

On the fifth of October, Sir Henry Clinton came up the North River with three thousand men. After making many feints to mislead the attention, he landed the next morning at Stony Point, and commenced his march over the mountains to Fort Montgomery. Governor Clinton, an active, resolute and intelligent officer, who commanded the garrison, upon being apprised of the movement, despatched a letter by express to General Putnam for succor. By the treachery of the messenger, the letter miscarried. General Putnam, astonished at hearing nothing respecting the enemy, rode, with General Parsons and Colonel Root, his adjutant-general, to reconnoitre them at King's Ferry. In the mean time, at five o'clock in the afternoon, Sir Henry Clinton's columns, having surmount-

ed the obstacles and barriers of nature, descended from the Thunder Hill, through thickets impassable but for light troops, and attacked* the different redoubts. The garrison, inspired by the conduct of their leaders, defended the works with distinguished

* The author of these memoirs, then Major of Brigade to the first Connecticut brigade, was alone at head-quarters when the firing began. He hastened to Colonel Wyllys, the senior officer in the camp, and advised him to send all the men not on duty to Fort Montgomery, without waiting for orders. About five hundred men marched instantly under Colonel Meigs; and the author, with Dr. Beardsley, a surgeon in the brigade, rode at full speed through a by path to let the garrison know that a reinforcement was on its march. Notwithstanding all the haste these officers made to and over the river, the fort was so completely invested on their arrival, that it was impossible to enter. They went on board the new frigate, which lay near the fortress, and had the misfortune to be idle though not unconcerned, spectators of the storm. They saw the minutest actions distinctly when the works were carried. The frigate, after receiving several platoons, slipped her cable and proceeded a little way up the river: but the wind and tide becoming adverse, the crew set her on fire, to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy, whose ships were approaching. The louring darkness of the night, the profound stillness that reigned, the interrupted flashes of the flames that illuminated the waters, the long shadows of the cliffs that now and then were seen, the explosion of the cannon which were left loaded in the ship, and the reverberating echo which resounded, at intervals, between the stupendous mountains on both sides of the river, composed an awful night-piece, for persons prepared (by the preceeding scene) to contemplate subjects of horrid sublimity.

valor. But, as the post had been designed principally to prevent the passing of ships, and as an assault in rear had not been expected, the works on the land side were incomplete and untenable. In the dusk of twilight the British entered with their bayonets fixed. Their loss was inconsiderable. Nor was that of the garrison great. Governor Clinton, his brother General James Clinton, Colonel Dubois, and most of the officers and men, effected their escape under cover of the thick smoke and darkness that suddenly prevailed. The capture of this fort by Sir Henry Clinton, together with the consequent removal of the chains and booms that obstructed the navigation, opened a passage to Albany, and seemed to favor a junction of his force with that of General Burgoyne. But the latter having been compelled to capitulate a few days after this event, and great numbers of militia having arrived from New England, the successful army returned to New York—yet not before a detachment from it, under the orders of General Vaughan, had burnt the defenceless town of Esopus, and several scattering buildings on the banks of the river.

Notwithstanding the army in the Highlands had been so much weakened, for the sake of strengthening the armies in other

quarters, as to have occasioned the loss of Fort Montgomery, yet that loss was productive of no ill consequences. Our main army in Pennsylvania, after having contended with a superior force in two indecisive battles, still held the enemy in check; while the splendid success which attended our arms at the northward, gave a more favorable aspect to the American affairs at the close of this campaign than they had ever before assumed.

When the enemy fell back to New York by water, we followed them a part of the way by land. Col. Meigs, with a detachment from the several regiments in General Parsons' brigade, having made a forced march from Crom's Pond to Westchester, surprised and broke up for a time the band of freebooters, of whom he brought off fifty, together with many cattle and horses which they had recently stolen.

Soon after this enterprise, Gen. Putnam advanced towards the British lines. As he had received intelligence that small bodies of the enemy were out with orders from Governor Tryon to burn Wright's Mills, he prevented it by detaching three parties of one hundred men in each. One of these parties fell in with and captured thirty-five and another forty of the new levies. But,

as he could not prevent a third hostile party from burning the house of Mr. Van Tassel, a noted Whig and a committee man, who was forced to go along with them, naked and barefoot, in a freezing night; he, for the professed purpose of retaliation, sent Capt. Buchanan, in a whaleboat, to burn the house of Gen. Oliver Delancy, on York Island. Buchanan effected his object, and by this expedition put a period for the present to that unmeaning and wanton species of destruction.

While Gen. Putnam quartered at New Rochelle, a scouting party which had been sent to West Farms, below Westchester, surrounded the house in which Col. James Delancy lodged, and, notwithstanding he crept under the bed the better to be concealed, brought him to head-quarters before morning. This officer was exchanged by the British general without delay, and placed at the head of the Cow-Boys, a licentious corps of irregulars, who, in the sequel, committed unheard of depredations and excesses.

It was distressing to see so beautiful a part of the country so barbarously wasted; and often to witness some peculiar scene of female misery. For most of the female inhabitants had been obliged to fly within the lines possessed by one party or the oth-

er. Near our quarters was one affecting scene of human misery and depravity. Mr. William Sutton of Mamaroneck, an inoffensive man, a merchant by profession, who lived in a decent fashion, and whose family had as happy prospects as almost any in the country, upon some imputation of toryism, went to the enemy. His wife, oppressed with grief in the disagreeable state of dereliction, did not long survive. Betsey Sutton, their eldest daughter, was a modest and lovely young woman, of about fifteen years old, when, at the death of her mother, the care of five or six children devolved upon her. She was discreet and provident beyond her years. But when we saw her, she looked to be feeble in health—broken in spirit—wan, melancholy, and dejected. She said, "that their last cow, which furnished milk for the children, had lately been taken away—that they had frequently been plundered of their wearing apparel and furniture, she believed, by both parties—that they had little more to lose—and that she knew not where to procure bread for the dear little ones, who had no father to provide for them"—*no mother*—she was going to have said—but a torrent of tears choaked articulation. In coming to that part of the country again, after some campaigns had elapsed, I found the habitation

desolate, and the garden overgrown with weeds. Upon inquiry, I learned that as soon as we left the place, some ruffians broke into to house, while she lay in bed, in the latter part of the night, and that having been terrified by their rudeness, she ran half naked into a neighboring swamp, where she continued until morning; there the poor girl caught a violent cold, which ended in a consumption. It finished a life without a spot—and a career of sufferings commenced and continued without a fault.

Sights of wretchedness always touched with commiseration the feelings of General Putnam, and prompted his generous soul to succor the afflicted. But the indulgence which he showed (whenever it did not militate against his duty) toward the deserted and suffering families of the tories in the state of New York, was the cause of his becoming unpopular with no inconsiderable class of people in that state. On the other side, he had conceived an unconquerable aversion to many of the persons who were entrusted with the disposal of tory property, because he believed them to have been guilty of peculations and other infamous practices. But although the enmity between him and the sequestrators was acrimonious as mutual; yet he lived in habits of amity with the most respectable char-

acters in public departments as well as in private life.

His character was also respected by the enemy. He had been acquainted with many of the principal officers in a former war. As flags frequently passed between the outposts, during his continuance on the lines, it was a common practice to forward newspapers by them; and as those printed by Rivington, the Royal printer in New York, were infamous for the falsehoods with which they abounded, General Putnam once sent a packet to his old friend General Robertson, with this billet: "Major General Putnam presents his compliments to Major General Robertson, and sends him some American newspapers for his perusal—when General Robertson shall have done with them, it is requested they be given to Rivington, in order that he may print some truth."

Late in the year we left the lines and repaired to the Highlands; for, upon the loss of Fort Montgomery, the commander-in-chief determined to build another fortification for the defence of the river. His Excellency accordingly wrote to General Putnam, to fix upon the spot. After reconnoitering all the different places proposed, and revolving in his mind their advantages for offence on the water, and defence on the

land, he fixed upon West Point. It is no vulgar praise to say, that to him belongs the glory of having chosen this rock of our military salvation. The position for water batteries, which might sweep the channel where the river formed a right angle, made it the most proper of any for commanding the navigation; while the rocky ridges, that rose in awful sublimity behind each other, rendered it impregnable, and even incapable of being invested by less than twenty thousand men. The British, who considered this post as a sort of American Gibraltar, never attempted it but by the treachery of an American officer. All the world knows that this project failed, and that West Point continued to be the receptacle of every thing valuable in military preparations to the present day.

In the month of January, 1778, when a snow two feet deep lay on the earth, General Parsons' brigade went to West Point and broke ground. Want of covering for the troops, together with want of tools and materials for the works, made the prospect truly goomy and discouraging. It was necessary that means should be found, though our currency was depreciated and our treasury exhausted. The estimates and requisitions of Colonel La Radiere, the engineer who laid out the works, altogether dispro-

portioned to our circumstances, served only to put us in mind of our poverty, and, as it were, to satirize our resources. His petulant behavior and unaccommodating disposition added further embarrassments. It was then that the patriotism of Governor Clinton shone in full lustre. His exertions to furnish supplies can never be too much commended. His influence, arising from his popularity, was unlimited; yet he hesitated not to put all his popularity at risk, whenever the federal interests demanded. Notwithstanding the impediments that opposed our progress, with his aid, before the opening of the campaign, the works were in great forwardness.

According to a resolution of Congress, an inquiry was to be made into the cause of military disasters. Major General M'Dougall, Brigadier General Huntington, and Colonel Wigglesworth, composed the Court of Inquiry on the loss of Fort Montgomery. Upon full knowledge and mature deliberation of facts on the spot, they reported the loss to have been occasioned by want of men, and not by any fault of the commanders.

General Putnam, who, during the investigation, was relieved from duty, as soon as Congress had approved the report, took command of the right wing of the grand ar-

my, under the orders of the general in chief. This was just after the battle of Monmouth, when the three armies which had, last year, acted separately, joined at White Plains. Our effective force, in one camp, was at no other time so respectable as at this juncture. The army consisted of sixty regular regiments of foot formed into fifteen brigades, four battalions of artillery, four regiments of horse, and several corps of state troops. But as the enemy kept close within their lines on York Island, nothing could be attempted. Towards the end of Autumn we broke up the camp, and went first to Fredericksburgh and thence to winter quarters.

In order to cover the country adjoining to the Sound, and to support the garrison of West Point, in case of an attack, Major General Putnam was stationed for the winter at Reading, in Connecticut. He had under his orders the brigade of New Hampshire, the two brigades of Connecticut, the corps of infantry commanded by Hazen, and that of cavalry by Sheldon.

The troops, who had been badly fed, badly clothed, and worse paid, by brooding over their grievances in the leisure and inactivity of winter quarters, began to think them intolerable. The Connecticut brigades formed the design of marching to Hartford, where the general assembly was then

in session, and of demanding redress at the point of the bayonet. Word having been brought to General Putnam that the second brigade was under arms for this purpose, he mounted his horse, galloped to the cantonment, and thus addressed them: "My brave lads, whither are you going? Do you intend to desert your officers, and to invite the enemy to follow you into the country? Whose cause have you been fighting and suffering so long in—is it not your own? Have you no property, no parents, wives, or children? You have behaved like men so far—all the world is full of your praise—and posterity will stand astonished at your deeds: But not if you spoil all at last. Don't you consider how much the country is distressed by the war, and that your officers have not been any better paid than yourselves? But we all expect better times, and that the country will do us ample justice. Let us all stand by one another then, and fight it out like brave soldiers. Think what a shame it would be for Connecticut men to run away from their officers!" After the several regiments had received the general as he rode along the line with drums beating and presented arms, the sergeants, who had then the command, brought the men to an order, in which position they continued while he was speaking. When

he had done, he directed the acting major of brigade to give the word for them to shoulder, march to their regimental parades, and lodge arms! all which they executed with promptitude and apparent good humor. One soldier only, who had been the most active, was confined in the quarter-guard: from whence, at night, he attempted to make his escape. But the sentinel, who had also been in the mutiny, shot him dead on the spot, and thus the affair subsided.

About the middle of the winter, while General Putnam was on a visit to his outpost at Horse-Neck, he found Governor Tryon advancing upon that town with a corps of fifteen hundred men. To oppose these, General Putnam had only a picket of one hundred and fifty men, and two iron field pieces, without horses or drag-ropes. He however planted his cannon on the high ground by the meeting-house, and retarded their approach by firing several times, until, perceiving the horse (supported by the infantry) about to charge, he ordered the picket to provide for their safety by retiring to a swamp inaccessible to horse; and secured his own by plunging down the steep precipice at the church upon a full trot. This precipice is so steep, where he descended, as to have artificial stairs composed of near-

ly one hundred stone steps for the accommodation of foot passengers. There the dragoons, who were but a sword's length from him, stopped short—for the declivity was so abrupt that they ventured not to follow:—and before they could gain the valley by going round the brow of the hill in the ordinary road, he was far enough beyond their reach. He continued his route unmolested to Stamford, from whence, having strengthened his picket by the junction of some militia, he came back again, and in turn pursued Governor Tryon in his retreat. As he rode down the precipice, one ball, of the many fired at him, went through his beaver. But Governor Tryon, by way of compensation for spoiling his hat, sent him soon afterwards, as a present, a complete suit of clothes.

In the campaign of 1779, which terminated the career of General Putnam's services, he commanded the Maryland line, posted at Buttermilk falls, about two miles below West Point. He was happy in possessing the friendship of the officers of that line, and in living on terms of hospitality with them. Indeed, there was no family in the army that lived better than his own. The general, his second son, Major Daniel Putnam, and the writer of these memoirs, composed that family. This campaign,

principally spent in strengthening the works of West Point, was only signalized for the storm of Stony Point, by the light infantry under the conduct of General Wayne, and the surprise of the post of Powle's Hook by the corps under the command of Colonel Henry Lee. When the army quitted the field, and marched to Morristown into winter quarters, General Putnam's family went into Connecticut for a few weeks. In December the general began his journey to Morristown. Upon the road between Pomfret and Hartford, he felt an unusual torpor slowly pervading his right hand and foot. This heaviness crept gradually on, and until it had deprived him of the use of his limbs on that side in a considerable degree, before he reached the house of his friend, Colonel Wadsworth. Still he was unwilling to consider his disorder of the paralytic kind, and endeavored to shake it off by exertion. Having found that impossible, a temporary dejection, disguised however under a veil of assumed cheerfulness, succeeded. But reason, philosophy, and religion, soon reconciled him to his fate. In that situation he remained, favored with such a portion of bodily activity as enabled him to walk and ride moderately, for many years. He retained unimpaired his relish for enjoyment, his love of pleasantry, his strength of mem-

ory, and all the faculties of his mind. As a proof that his powers of memory were not weakened, it ought to be observed, that at a late period he repeated, from recollection, all the adventures of his life which are here recorded, and which had formerly been communicated to the compiler in detached conversations.

In patient, yet fearless expectation of the approach of the KING OF TERRORS, whom he had full often faced in the field of blood, the christian hero enjoyed in domestic retirement the fruit of his early industry. Having in youth provided a competent subsistence for old age, he was secured from the danger of penury and distress, to which so many officers and soldiers, worn out in the public service, had been reduced. He closed his honorable and eventful life on the 29th of May, 1790, at Brooklyn, Connecticut, and was interred in the cemetery there. The following eulogium was pronounced at his grave by Dr. A. Waldo.

"Those venerable relics! once delighted in the endearing domestic virtues which constitute the excellent neighbor—husband—parent—and worthy brother! liberal and substantial in his friendship; unsuspicious, open, and generous; just and sincere in dealing: a benevolent citizen of the world,

he consecrated in his bosom the noble qualities of an Honest Man.

"Born a *Hero*, whom nature taught and cherished in the lap of innumerable toils and dangers, he was terrible in battle! But, from the amiableness of his heart, when carnage ceased, his humanity spread over the *field*, like the refreshing zephyrs of a summer's evening! The prisoner—the wounded—the sick—the forlorn—experienced the delicate sympathy of *this Soldier's Pillar*. The poor and needy of every description, received the charitable bounties of *this* Christian Soldier.

"He pitied littleness—loved goodness—admired greatness, and even aspired to its glorious summit! The friend, the servant, and almost unparalleled lover of his country—worn with honorable age, and the former toils of *war*—Putnam rests from his labors!

'Till mouldering worlds and trembling systems burst!
'When the last trump shall renovate his dust—
'Still by the mandate of eternal truth,
'His soul will flourish in immortal youth!'

'This all who knew him, know; this all who lov'd him, tell.'"

Dr. Timothy Dwight, late President of Yale College, wrote the following inscription, which is engraved on his monument, with some trifling alterations, made merely to consult the capacity of the stone:

This Monument
Is erected to the memory of
The Honorable Israel Putnam, Esq;
Major General in the Armies
of
The United States of America:
Who was born at Salem,
In the Province of Massachusetts,
On the 7th day of January, A. D. 1718:
And died at Brooklyn,
In the State of Connecticut,
On the 29th day of May, A. D. 1790.
Passenger,
If thou art a Soldier,
Go not away
Till thou hast dropped a tear
Over the dust of a Hero,
Who, ever tenderly attentive
To the lives and happiness of his men,
Dared to lead
Where any one dared to follow.
If thou art a Patriot,
Remember with gratitude
How much thou and thy country
Owe to the disinterested and gallant exertions
Of the Patriot
Who sleeps beneath this marble.
If thou art an honest, generous, and worthy man,
Render a sincere and cheerful tribute of respect
To a Man
Whose generosity was singular;
Whose honesty was proverbial;
And who
With a slender education,
With small advantages,
And without Powerful Friends,
Raised himself to universal esteem,
And to offices of eminent distinction,
By Personal Worth,
And by the diligent services
Of a Useful Life.

APPENDIX.

From a review of the preceding memoirs, we find that courage, enterprise, activity, and perseverance were the first characteristics of the mind of General Putnam. There is a kind of mechanical courage, the offspring of pride, habit, or discipline, that may push a coward not only to perform his duty but even to venture on acts of heroism. Putnam's courage was of a different species. It was ever attended with a serenity of soul, a clearness of conception, a degree of self-possession, and a superiority of all the vicisitudes of fortune, entirely distinct from any thing that can be procured by the ferment of blood, and flutter of spirits; which not unfrequently precipitate men to action, when stimulated by intoxication or some other transient exhiliration. The heroic character, thus founded on constitution and animal spirits, cherished by education and ideas of personal freedom, confirmed by temperance and habits of exercise, was completed by the dictate of reason, the love of his country, and an invincible sense of duty. Such were the qualities and principles, that enabled him to meet unappalled the shafts of adversity, and to pass in triumph through the furnace of affliction.

The effect of his gradual acquisition of property, generally favorable to individual virtue and public felicity, should not, however, be passed over in silence. If there is something fascinating in the charms of a country life, from the contemplation of beautiful landscapes; there is likewise something elevating to the soul, in the consciousness of being lord of the soil, and having the power of creating them. The man can scarcely be guilty of a sordid action, or of even descending to an ungenerous thought, who, removed from the apprehension of want, sees his farm daily meliorating and assuming whatever appearance he pleases to prescribe. This situation converts the farmer into a species of rural philosopher, by inspiring an honest pride in his rank as a freeman, flattering the natural propensity for personal independence, and nourishing an unlimited hospitality and philanthropy in his social character.

While General Putnam was a prisoner in Canada, at the house of Colonel Schuyler, he became acquainted with Mrs. Howe, a fair captive, whose history would not be read without emotion, if it could be written in the same affecting manner in which I have often heard it told. She was still young and handsome herself, though she had two daughters of marriageable age.

Distress, which had taken somewhat from the original redundancy of her bloom, and added a softening paleness to her cheeks, rendered her appearance the more engaging. Her face, that seemed to have been formed for the assemblage of dimples and smiles, was clouded with care. The natural sweetness was not, however, soured by despondency and petulence; but chastened by humility and resignation. This mild daughter of sorrow looked as if she had known the day of prosperity, when serenity and gladness of soul were the inmates of her bosom. That day was past, and the once lively features now assumed a tender melancholy, which witnessed her irreparable loss. She needed not the customary weeds of mourning, or the fallacious pageantry of wo, to prove her widowed state. She was in that state of affliction, when the excess is so far abated as to permit the subject to be drawn into conversation without opening the wound afresh. It is then rather a source of pleasure than pain to dwell upon the circumstances in narration. Every thing conspired to make her story interesting. Her first husband had been killed and scalped by the Indians some years before. By an unexpected assault in 1756 upon Fort Dummer, where she then happened to be present with Mr. Howe, her

second husband, the savages carried the fort, murdered the greater part of the garrison, mangled in death her husband, and led her away with seven children into captivity. She was for some months kept with them; and during their rambles she was frequently on the point of perishing with hunger, and as often subjected to hardships, seemingly intolerable to one of so delicate a frame. Some time after the career of her miseries began, the Indians selected a couple of their young men to marry her daughters. The fright and disgust which the intelligence of this intention occasioned to these poor young creatures, added infinitely to the sorrows and perplexities of their frantic mother. To prevent the hated connexion, all the activity of female resource was called into exertion. She found an opportunity of conveying to the governor a petition, that her daughters might be received into a convent for the sake of securing the salvation of their souls. Happily the pious fraud succeeded.

About the same time the savages separated, and carried off her other five children into different tribes. She was ransomed by an elderly French officer for four hundred livres. Of no avail were the cries of this tender mother—a mother desolated by the loss of her children, who were thus torn

from her fond embraces and removed many hundred miles from each other, into the utmost recesses of Canada. With them (could they have been kept together) she would most willingly have wandered to the extremities of the world, and accepted as a desirable portion the cruel lot of slavery for life. But she was precluded from the sweet hope of ever beholding them again. The insufferable pang of parting, and the idea of eternal separation, planted the arrow of despair deep in her soul. Though all the world was no better than a desert, and all its inhabitants were then indifferent to her—yet the loveliness of her appearance in sorrow had awakened affections, which, in the aggravation of her troubles, were to become a new source of affliction.

The officer who bought her of the Indians had a son, who also held a commission, and resided with his father. During her continuance in the same house, at St. Johns, the double attachment of the father and the son rendered her situation extremely distressing. It is true, the calmness of age delighted to gaze respectfully on her beauty, but the impetuosity of youth was fired to madness by the sight of her charms. One day, the son, whose attentions had been long lavished upon her in vain, finding her alone in a chamber, forcibly seized her hand, and sol-

emnly declared that he would now satiate the passion which she had so long refused to indulge. She recurred to entreaties, struggles, and tears, those prevalent female weapons, which the distraction of danger, not less than the promptness of genius, is wont to supply: while he, in the delirium of vexation and desire, snatched a dagger, and swore he would put an end to her life if she persisted to struggle. Mrs. Howe, assuming the dignity of conscious virtue, told him it was what she most ardently wished, and begged him to plunge the poignard through her heart, since the mutual importunities and jealousies of such rivals, had rendered her life, though innocent, more irksome and insupportable than death itself. Struck with a momentary compunction, he seemed to relent, and relax his hold—and she, availing herself of his irresolution, or absence of mind, escaped down the stairs. In her disordered state, she told the whole transaction to his father, who directed her, in future, to sleep in a small bed at the foot of that in which his wife lodged. The affair soon reached the governor's ears, and the young officer was, shortly afterwards, sent on a tour of duty to Detroit.

This gave her a short respite; but she dreaded his return, and the humiliating insults for which she might be reserved. Her

children, too, were ever present to her melancholy mind. A stranger, a widow, a captive, she knew not where to apply for relief. She had heard of the name of Schuyler—she was yet to learn, that it was only another appellation for the friend of suffering humanity. As that excellent man was on his way from Quebec to the Jerseys, under a parol for a limited time, she came with feeble and trembling steps to him. The same maternal passion, which sometimes overcomes the timidity of nature in the birds, when plundered of their callow nestlings, emboldened her, notwithstanding her native diffidence, to disclose these griefs which were ready to devour her in silence. While her delicate aspect was heightened to a glowing blush, for fear of offending by an inexcusable importunity, or of transgressing the rules of propriety, by representing herself as being an object of admiration; she told, with artless simplicity, all the story of her woes. Colonel Schuyler, from that moment, became her protector, and endeavored to procure her liberty. The person who purchased her from the savages, unwilling to part with so fair a purchase, demanded a thousand livres for her ransom. But Colonel Schuyler, on his return to Quebec, obtained from the governor an order, in consequence of which, Mrs. Howe was giv-

en up to him for four hundred livres; nor did his active goodness rest, until every one of her five sons were restored to her.

Business having made it necessary that Colonel Schuyler should precede the prisoners who were exchanged, he recommended his fair captive to the protection of his friend Putnam. She had just recovered from the measles when the party were preparing to set off for New England. By this time the young French officer had returned, with his passion rather increased than abated by absence. He pursued her whersoever she went, and, although he could make no advances in her affection, he seemed resolved by perseverance to carry his point. Mrs. Howe, terrified by his treatment, was obliged to keep constantly near Major Putnam, who informed the young officer, that he should protect that lady at the risk of his life. However, this amorous and rash lover, in whose boiling veins such an agitation was excited, that while he was speaking of her the blood* would frequently gush to his nostrils, followed the prisoners to Lake Champlain; and when the boat in which the fair captive was embarked had pushed from the shore, he jumped into the lake, and

* This physical effect, wonderful as it may appear, is so far from being a fictitious embellishment, that it was proved by the most solemn testimony of several persons then living.

swam after her until it rowed out of sight. Whether he perished in this distracted state of mind, or returned to the shore, is not known.

In the long march from captivity, through an inhospitable wilderness, encumbered with five small children, she suffered incredible hardships. Though endowed with masculine fortitude, she was truly feminine in strength, and must have fainted by the way, had it not been for the assistance of Major Putnam. There were a thousand good offices which the helplessness of her condition demanded, and which the gentleness of his nature delighted to perform. He assisted in leading her little ones, and in carrying them over the swampy grounds, and runs of water, with which their course was frequently intersected. He mingled his own mess with that of the widow and the fatherless, and assisted them in supplying and preparing their provisions. Upon arriving within the settlements, they experienced a reciprocal regret at separation, and were only consoled by the expectation of soon mingling in the embraces of their former acquaintances and dearest connexions.

After the conquest of Canada, in 1760, she made a journey to Quebec, in order to bring back her two daughters whom she had left in a convent. She found one of

them married to a French officer. The other, having contracted a great fondness for the religious sisterhood, with reluctance consented to leave them and return.

A few years previous to the war between Great Britain and America, a question of some consequence arose respecting the title of the lands in Hinsdale, (the town in which Mrs. Howe resided,) insomuch that it was deemed expedient that an agent should be sent to England to advocate the claims of the town. It may be mentioned as a proof of the acknowledged superiority of the standing and address of this gentlewoman, that she was universally designated for the mission. But the dispute was fortunately accommodated to the satisfaction of the people, without their being obliged to make use of her talents.

In the year 1776, when General Washington expected that the British were about to attack New York, he sent the following orders and instructions for Major General Putnam:

"As there are the best reasons to believe that the enemy's fleet and army, which left Nantasket Road last Wednesday evening, are bound to New York, to endeavor to possess that important post, and, if possible, to secure the communication by Hudson River to Canada; it must be our care to

prevent them from accomplishing their designs. To that end I have detached Brigadier General Heath with the whole body of riflemen and five battalions of the continental army, by the way of Norwich, in Connecticut, to New York. These, by an express arrived yesterday from General Heath, I have reason to believe, are in New York. Six more battalions, under General Sullivan, marched this morning by the same route, and will, I hope, arrive there in eight or ten days at farthest. The rest of the army will immediately follow in divisions, leaving only a convenient space between each division to prevent confusion, and want of accommodation, upon their march. You will no doubt make the best despatch in getting to New York. Upon your arrival there, you will assume the command, and immediately proceed in continuing to execute the *plan* proposed by Major General Lee, for fortifying that city, and securing the passes of the East and North Rivers. If, upon consultation with the brigadiers general, and engineers, any alteration in that *plan* is thought necessary, you are at liberty to make it; cautiously avoiding to break in too much upon the main design, unless where it may be apparently necessary so to do, and that by the general voice and opinion of the gentlemen above mentioned.

"You will meet the Quarter Master General, Colonel Mifflin, and Commissary General,* at New York. As these are both men of excellent talents in their different departments, you will do well to give them all the authority and assistance they require; and should a council of war be necessary, it is my direction they assist at it.

"Your long service and experience will, better than my particular directions at this distance, point out to you the works most proper to be first raised; and your perseverance, activity and zeal, will lead you (without my recommending it) to exert every nerve to disappoint the enemy's designs.

"Devoutly praying that the Power which has hitherto sustained the American arms, may continue to bless them with the divine protection, I bid you—FAREWELL.

"Given at Head Quarters, in Cambridge, this 29th of March, 1776.

"GEO. WASHINGTON."

Invested with these commands, General Putnam traveled by long and expeditious stages to New York. His first precaution, upon his arrival, was to prevent disturbance or surprise in the night season. With these

* Colonel Joseph Trumbull, eldest son to the late governor of that name.

objects in view, after posting the necessary guards, he issued his Orders. He instituted, likewise, other wholesome regulations to meliorate the police of the troops, and to preserve the good agreement that subsisted between them and the citizens.

Congress having intimated a desire of consulting with the commander in chief, on the critical posture of affairs, his excellency repaired to Philadelphia accordingly, and was absent from the twenty-first of May, until the sixth of June. General Putnam, who commanded in that interval, had it in charge to open all letters directed to General Washington *on public service*, and, if important, after regulating his conduct by their contents, to forward them by express; to expedite the works then erecting; to begin others which were specified; to establish signals for communicating an alarm; to guard against the possibility of surprise; to secure well the powder magazine; to augment by every possible means in his power the quantity of catridges; and to send Brigadier General Lord Stirling to put the posts in the Highlands into a proper condition of defence. He had also a *private and confidential instruction*, to afford whatever aid might be required by the provincial congress of New York, for apprehending certain of their disaffected citizens; and as it

would be most convenient to take the detachment for this service from the troops on Long Island, under the command of Brigadier General Greene, it was recommended that this officer should be advised of the plan, and that the execution should be conducted with secrecy and celerity, as well as with decency and good order. In the records of the army are preserved the daily orders which were issued in the absence of the commander in chief, who, on his return, was not only satisfied that the works had been prosecuted with all possible despatch, but also that the other duties had been properly discharged.

The winter's campaign of 1777 (for our troops constantly kept the field after regaining a foothold in the Jerseys) has never yet been faithfully and feelingly described. The sudden restoration of our cause from the very verge of ruin, was interwoven with such a tissue of inscrutable causes and extraordinary events, that, fearful of doing the subject greater injustice by a passing disquisition than by a purposed silence, I leave it to the leisure of abler pens. The ill policy of the British doubtless contributed to accelerate this event. For the manner, impolitic as inhuman, in which they managed their temporary conquests, tended evidently to alienate the affections of their adhe-

rents, to confirm the wavering in an opposite interest, to rouse the supine into activity, to assemble the dispersed to the standard of America, and to infuse a spirit of revolt into the minds of those men who had, from necessity, submitted to their power. Their conduct in warring with fire and sword against the imbecility of youth and the decrepitude of age; against the arts, the sciences, the curious inventions and the elegant improvements in civilized life; against the melancholy widow, the miserable orphan, the peaceable professor of humane literature, and the sacred minister of the gospel, seemed to operate as powerfully as if purposely intended to kindle the dormant spark of resistance into an inextinguishable flame. If we add to the black catalogue of provocations already enumerated, their insatiable rapacity in plundering friends and foes indiscriminately; their libidinous brutality in violating the chastity of the female sex; their more than Gothic rage in defacing private writings, public records, libraries of learning, dwellings of individuals, edifices for education, and temples of the deity; together with their insufferable ferocity (unprecedented indeed among civilized nations) in murdering on the field of battle the wounded while begging for mercy; in causing their prisoners to famish with hunger

and cold in prisons and prison ships; and in carrying their malice beyond death itself, by denying the decent rites of sepulture to the dead—we shall not be astonished that the yeomanry in the two Jerseys, when the first glimmering of hope began to break in upon them, rose as one man, with the unalterable resolution to perish in the generous cause or expel their merciless invaders.

The principal officers, stationed at a variety of well chosen, and at some almost inaccessible positions, seemed all to be actuated by the same soul, and only to vie with each other in giving proofs of vigilence, enterprise and valor. From what has been said respecting the scantiness of our aggregate force, it will be concluded that the number of men, under the orders of each, was indeed very small. But the uncommon alertness of the troops, who were incessantly hovering round the enemy in scouts, and the constant communication they kept between the several stations most contiguous to each other, (agreeably to the instructions of the general in chief,) together with their readiness in giving, and confidence of receiving, such reciprocal aid as the exigencies might require, served to supply the defect of force.

This manner of doing duty not only put our own posts beyond the reach of sudden

insult and surprise, but so extremely harassed and intimidated the enemy, that foragers were seldom sent out by them, and never except in very large parties. General Dickenson, who commanded on General Putnam's left, discovered about the 20th of January, a foraging party consisting of about 400 men, on the opposite side of the *Mill Stone*, two miles from Somerset court-house. As the bridge was possessed and defended by three field pieces, so that it could not be passed, General Dickenson, at the head of four hundred militia, broke the ice, crossed the river where the water was about three feet deep, resolutely attacked and totally defeated the foragers. Upon their abandoning the convoy, a few prisoners, forty wagons, and more than a hundred draught horses, with a considerable booty of cattle and sheep, fell into his hands.

Nor were our operations on General Putnam's right flank less fortunate. To give countenance to the numerous friends of the British government in the county of Monmouth, appears to have been a principal motive with Sir William Howe for stretching the chain of his cantonments (by his own confession previously to his disaster) rather too far. After that chain became broken, as I have already related, by the blows at Trenton and Princeton, he was

obliged to collect, during the rest of the winter, the useless remains in his barracks at Brunswick. In the mean time General Putnam was much more successful in his attempts to protect our dispersed and dispirited friends in the same district; who, environed on every side by envenomed adversaries, remained inseparably rivited in affection to American Independence. He first detached Colonel Gurney, and afterwards Major Davis, with such parties of militia as could be spared for their support. Several skirmishes ensued, in which our people always had the advantage. They took, at different times, many prisoners, horses and wagons, from foraging parties. In effect, so well did they cover the country, as to induce some of the most respectable inhabitants to declare, that the security of the persons, as well as the salvation of the property, of many friends to freedom, was owing to the spirited exertions of these two detachments: who, at the time that they rescued the country from the tyranny of tories, afforded an opportunity for the militia to recover from their consternation, to embody themselves in warlike array, and to stand on their defence.

During this period, Lord Cornwallis sent out another foraging party towards Boundbrook. General Putnam, having received

notice from his emmissaries, detached Major Smith, who had formed an ambush, attacked the enemy, killed several horses, took a few prisoners and sixteen baggage wagons, without sustaining any injury. By such operations, our hero, in the course of the winter, captured nearly a thousand prisoners.

On our side, we have seen that the old continental army expired with the year 1776; since which, invention had been tortured with expedients, and zeal with efforts, to levy another; for on the success of the recruiting service depended the salvation of the country. The success was such as not to puff us up to presumption, or depress us to despair. The army in the Jerseys under the orders of the general in chief, consisted of all the troops raised south of the Hudson; that in the northern department of the New Hampshire brigade, two brigades of Massachusetts, and the brigade of New York, together with some irregular corps; and that in the Highlands of the remaining two brigades of Massachusetts, the Connecticut line consisting of two brigades, the brigade of Rhode Island, and one regiment of New York. Upon hearing of the loss of Ticonderoga, and the progress of the British towards Albany, General Washington ordered the northern army to be reinforced

with the two brigades of Massachusetts then in the Highlands—and, upon finding the army under his immediate command outnumbered by that of Sir William Howe, which had by the circuitous route of the Chesapeake invaded Pennsylvania, he also called from the Highlands one of the Connecticut brigades and that of Rhode Island, to his own assistance.

In the neighborhood of General Putnam there was no enemy capable of exciting alarms. The army left at New York seemed only designed for its defence. In it were several entire corps, composed of tories who had flocked to the British standard. There was, besides, a band of lurking miscreants, not properly enrolled, who stayed chiefly at Westchester; from whence they infested the country between the two armies, pillaged the cattle, and carried off the peaceable inhabitants. It was an unworthy policy in British generals to encourage banditti. The whig inhabitants on the edge of our lines, and still lower down, who had been plundered in a merciless manner, delayed not to strip the tories in return. People most nearly connected and allied, frequently became most exasperated and inveterate in malice. Then the ties of fellowship were broken—then friendship itself being soured to enmity, the mind readily gave

way to private revenge, uncontrolled retaliation, and all the deforming passions that disgrace humanity. Enormities, almost without a name, were perpetrated—at the description of which, the bosom not frozen to apathy must glow with a mixture of pity and indignation. To prevent the predatory incursions from below, and to cover the county of Westchester, General Putnam detached from his head quarters at Peekskill, Meigs' regiment, which, in the course of the campaign, struck several partisan strokes, and achieved the objects for which it was sent. He likewise took measures, without noise or ostentation, to secure himself from being surprised and carried within the British lines by the tories, who had formed a plan for the purpose. The information of this intended enterprise, conveyed to him through several channels, was corroborated by that obtained and transmitted by the commander in chief.

In the year 1780, affairs were not so prosperous in the state of New Jersey as when General Putnam commanded there. Indeed, it seemed as if his name had been a protection to the inhabitants; for during the summer of that year the British troops made frequent incursions into the country, and committed numerous attrocities. In the month of June, a large body of the enemy,

commanded by General Knyphausen, landed at Elizabethtown Point, and proceeded into the country. They were harrassed in their march by Colonel Dayton and the troops under his command, but with too feeble a force to arrest the enemy's progress. When they arrived at Connecticut Farms, according to their usual custom, they burnt the Presbyterian church, the parsonage house, and a considerable part of the village. But the most cruel and wanton act that was perpetrated during this incursion, was the murder of Mrs. Caldwell, the wife of the Rev. Mr. Caldwell, of Elizabethtown.

This amiable woman, seeing the enemy advancing, retired with her housekeeper, a child of three years old, an infant of eight months, and a little maid, to a room secured on all sides by stone walls, except at a window opposite the enemy. She prudently took this precaution to avoid the danger of transient shot, should the ground be disputed near that place, which happened not to be the case; neither was there any firing from either party near the house, until the fatal moment when Mrs. Caldwell, unsuspicious of any immediate danger, sitting on the bed with her little child by the hand, and her nurse with her infant babe by her side, was instantly shot dead by an unfeeling British soldier, who had come round to

the unguarded part of the house, with an evident design to perpetrate the horrid deed. Many circumstances attending this inhuman murder, evince, not only that it was committed by the enemy with design, but also, that it was by permission, if not by the command of General Knyphausen, in order to intimidate the populace to relinquish their cause. A circumstance which aggravated this piece of cruelty, was, that when the British officers were made acquainted with this piece of cruelty, they did not interfere to prevent the corpse from being stripped and burnt, but left it half the day, stripped in part, to be tumbled about by the rude soldiery; and at last it was removed from the house, before it was burnt, by the aid of those who were not of the army.

Mrs. Caldwell was an amiable woman, of a sweet and even temper, discreet, prudent, benevolent, soft and engaging in her manners, and beloved by all her acquaintance. She left nine promising children.

Mrs. Caldwell's death was soon followed by that of her husband. In November, 1781, Mr. Caldwell hearing of the arrival of a young lady at Elizabethtown Point, whose family, in New York, had been peculiarly kind to the American prisoners, rode down to escort her up to town. Having received her into his chair, the sentinel observing a

little bundle tied in the lady's handkerchief, said it must be seized for the state. Mr. Caldwell instantly left the chair, saying he would deliver it to the commanding officer, who was then present; and as he stepped forward with this view, another soldier impertinently told him to stop, which he immediately did; the soldier, notwithstanding, without further provocation, shot him dead on the spot. Such was the untimely fate of Mr. Caldwell. The villain who committed this attrocious and cold-blooded murder did not escape punishment: he was seized and executed. Mr. Caldwell was an eloquent preacher, and a warm patriot, and had greatly distinguished himself in supporting the cause of his suffering country.

The bold and intrepid spirit of General Putnam, so often displayed in acts of successful rashness, was never more apparent than on the occasion related in the following anecdote:

In the year 1756, when Putnam fought against the French and their Indian allies, he was accidentally with a boat and five men on the eastern side of the Hudson river, near the spot where Fort Miller formerly stood, and contiguous to the falls. His men, who were on the opposite side, informed him by signal that a considerable body of savages were advancing to surround him. There was not a moment to lose. Three modes of conduct were at his option: to remain, fight, and be sacrificed; to attempt to pass to the other side exposed to the full shot of the enemy; or to

sail down the waterfalls, with almost a certainty of being overwhelmed, as the river was high.—These were the only alternatives. Putnam did not hesitate, and jumped into his boat at the fortunate instant, for one of his companions, who was at a little distance, was a victim to the Indians. His enemies soon arrived, and discharged their muskets at the boat before he could get out of their reach. No sooner had he escaped this danger through the rapidity of the current, but death presented itself under a more terrific form. Rocks, whose points projected above the surface of the water; large masses of timber that nearly closed the passage; absorbing gulfs, and rapid descents, for a quarter of a mile, left him no hope of escape but by a miracle. Putnam, however, placed himself at the helm, and directed it with the utmost tranquillity. His companions saw him with admiration, torror, and astonishment, avoid with the utmost address the rocks and threatening gulfs, which they every instant expected to devour him. He disappeared, rose again, and directing his course across the only passage which he could possibly make, he at length gained the even surface of the river that flowed at the bottom of this dreadful cascade. The Indians were no less surprised. This miracle astonished them almost as much as the sight of the first Europeans that approached the banks of this river. They considered Putnam as invulnerable; and they thought that they should offend the Great Spirit, if they attempted the life of a man that was so visibly under his immediate protection.

The Rev. Dr. Dwight, in his travels, observes, that "it is not so extensively known as it ought to be, that General Putnam commanded the American forces at the battle of Breed's Hill; and that to his courage and conduct the United States are particularly indebted for the advantages of that day, one of the most brilliant in the annals of this country." He adds the following note, extracted from the sermon of the Rev. Dr. Whitney on the death of General Putnam:

"The friends of the late General Putnam feel themselves not a little obliged to this worthy and respectable biographer, for giving to the public the distinguished features in the general's character, and the memorable actions of his life; yet wish that a more perfect and just account had been given of the battle on Bunker's Hill, so far as General Putnam was concerned in it. In page 107 of his life are the following words: 'The provincial generals having received advice that the British commander in chief designed to take possession of the heights on the peninsula of Charlestown, detached a thousand men in the night of the 16th of June, under the orders of General Warren, to entrench themselves upon one of those eminences.' And, in page 110th, 'In this battle the presence and example of General Putnam, who arrived with the reinforcement, were not less conspicuous than useful.'— From the first of these passages the reader is led to conclude, that the detachment was first put under the orders of General Warren: from the second, that General Putnam came to General

Warren's aid with a reinforcement. The true state of the case was this: The detachment at first was put under the command of General Putnam. With it he took possession of the hill, and ordered the battle from the beginning to the end. General Warren, (one of the most illustrious patriots,) arrived alone on the hill, and as a volunteer joined the Americans just as the action commenced; and within half an hour received a mortal wound, while he was waxing valliant in battle, and soon expired. These facts, General Putnam himself gave me soon after the battle, and also repeated them to me after his life was printed. Other evidence to confirm what I have said here, I am able to produce, if any should call for it."

In the spring of 1818, an account of the battle of Bunker hill was published in a literary paper entitled the Port Folio, by Henry Dearborn, Esq. in which he animadverted on the conduct of General Putnam on that occasion with great severity. This attack upon the hard-earned reputation of the general excited universal indignation, and drew forth a mass of testimony in his favor, which, while it added additional lustre to his name, covered the author of the slander with confusion. Among the numerous refutations of the calumny, we deem it necessary to copy only the following testimonials, from the rejoinder to General Dearborn's statement published by Daniel Putnam, Esq., son of the late general:

"In a letter from Judge Grosvenor, of Pomfret, Connecticut, it is stated that he was a lieutenant under the command of General Putnam, when, on the evening of the 16th June, 1775, a rodoubt was formed on Breed's Hill, under the immediate superintendence of the general, who was extremely active, and directed principally the operations during the battle on the 17th of June. And he adds, of the officers on the ground, the most active within his observation were, General Putnam, Colonel Prescott, and Captain Knowlton.

"The following is a letter from Colonel John Trumbull, of New York, an officer of distinction in the revolutionary war, and the celebrated historical painter who was employed in his profession by the Government of the United States, dated New York, 30th of March, 1818:

'In the summer of 1786, I became acquainted in London with Colonel John Small, of the British army, who had served in America many years, and had known General Putnam intimately during the war of Canada, from 1756 to 1763. From him I had the two following anecdotes respecting the battle of Bunker Hill. I shall nearly repeat his words: Looking at the picture, which I had then almost completed, he said—"*I don't like the situation in which you have placed my old friend Putnam: you have not done him justice. I wish you would alter that part of your picture, and introduce a circumstance which actually happened, and which I can never forget.—When the British troops advanced the second time*

to the attack of the redoubt, I, with other officers, was in front of the line to encourage the men; we had advanced very near the works undisturbed, when an irregular fire, like a feu de joi, was poured in on us; it was cruelly fatal. The troops fell back, and when I looked to the right and left, I saw not one officer standing; I glanced my eye to the enemy, and saw several young men levelling their pieces at me: I knew their excellence as marksmen, and considered myself gone. At this moment my old friend Putnam rushed forward, and striking up the muzzles of their pieces with his sword, cried out, 'For God's sake my lads, don't fire at that man—I love him as I do my brother.' *We were so near each other that I heard his words distinctly. He was obeyed; I bowed, thanked him and walked away unmolested.*"

'The other anecdote relates to the death of General Warren. At the moment when the troops succeeded in carrying the redoubt, and the Americans were in full retreat, General Howe, who had been hurt by a spent ball which bruised his ankle, was leaning on my arm. He called suddenly to me: "Do you see that elegant young man who has just fallen?—do you know him?" I looked to the spot to which he pointed—"Good God, sir, I believe it is my friend Warren." "Leave me then instantly—run—keep off the troops—save him, if possible." I flew to the spot: "My dear friend," I said to him, "I hope you are not badly hurt?" He looked up, seemed to recollect me, smiled, and

died! A musket ball had passed through the upper part of his head."

'Colonel Small had the character of an honorable, upright man, and could have no conceivable motive for deviating from truth in relating these circumstances to me; I therefore believe them to be true. You remember, my dear sir, the viper biting the file. The character of your father for courage, humanity, generosity and integrity, is too firmly established, by the testimony of those *who did know him*, to be tarnished by the breath of one who confesses that he *did not*. Accept, my dear sir, this feeble tribute to your father's memory, from one who *knew* him, *respected* him, *loved* him—and who wishes health and prosperity to you and all the good man's posterity.

JOHN TRUMBULL.

Daniel Putnam, Esq.'

"I shall make no comment," says Colonel Putnam, "on the first anecdote by Colonel Small, except that the circumstances were related by General Putnam, without any essential alteration, soon after the battle; and that there was an interview of the parties on the lines between Prospect and Bunker Hill, at the request of Colonel Small, not long afterwards."

The following is the last letter written by General Washington, in his military character, to General Putnam. It fully illustrates the merits

of the latter, and proves the high estimation in which he was held by the commander-in-chief:

Head-Quarters, 2d June, 1783.

Dear Sir,

Your favor of the 20th of May, I received with much pleasure; for I can assure you, that among the many worthy and meritorious officers with whom I have had the happiness to be connected in service through the course of this war, and from whose cheerful assistance in the various and trying vicisitudes of a complicated contest I have derived so much benefit, *the name of a* PUTNAM *is not forgotten*, nor will be, but with that stroke of time which shall obliterate from my mind the remembrance of all those toils and fatigues through which we have struggled for the preservation and establishment of the *rights*, *liberties*, and *independence* of our *country*.

Your congratulations on the happy prospects of peace and independent security, with their attendant blessings to the UNITED STATES, I receive with great satisfaction; and beg that you will accept a return of my gratulations to you on this auspicious event—an event, in which, great as it is in itself, and glorious as it will probably be in its consequences, you have a right to participate largely, from the distinguished part you have contributed towards its attainment.

But while I contemplate the greatness of the object for which we have contended, and felicitate you on the happy issue of our toils and labors, which have terminated with such general satis-

faction, I lament that you should feel the ungrateful returns of a country, in whose service you have exhausted your bodily strength, and expended the vigor of a youthful constitution. I wish, however, that your expectations of returning liberality may be verified. I have a hope they may;—but should they not, your case will not be a singular one. *Ingratitude has been experienced in all ages, and* REPUBLICS *in particular have ever been famed for the exercise of that unnatural and* SORDID VICE.

The Secretary at War, who is now here, informs me that you have ever been considered as entitled to full pay, since your absence from the field; and that you will still be considered in that light until the close of the war: at which period you will be equally entitled to the same emoluments of half-pay or commutation, as other officers of your rank. The same opinion is also given by the Paymaster General, who is now with the army, empowered by Mr. Morris for the settlement of all their accounts, and who will attend to yours whenever you shall think proper to send on for the purpose; which it will probably be best for you to do in a short time.

I anticipate with pleasure the day (and that I trust not far off) when I shall quit the busy scenes of a military employment, and retire to the more tranquil walks of domestic life. In that, or whatever other situation Providence may dispose of my future days, THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE MANY FRIENDSHIPS AND CONNEXIONS I HAVE HAD THE HAPPINESS TO CONTRACT

WITH THE GENTLEMEN OF THE ARMY, WILL BE ONE OF MY MOST GRATEFUL REFLECTIONS. Under this contemplation, and impressed with the sentiments of benevolence and regard, I commend you, my dear sir, my other friends, and, with them, the interests and happiness of our dear country, to the KEEPING AND PROTECTION OF ALMIGHTY GOD.

I have the honor to be, &c.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

To the Honorable
Major General Putnam.

THE END.